

the christian SCHOLAR



Artists in Colleges / Ben Shahn

The Secular Historian Today / Marjorie Reeves

The Limits of Scientific Knowledge / Edwin F. Taylor

XLIII/2

SUMMER 1960

\$1.25

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

The Christian Scholar is a journal devoted to exploring the issues that arise as the intellectual life of our day is examined in the light of Christian faith. It exists to recognize the contributions to the theological enterprise of scholars working faithfully in their own disciplines, and to bring theological dimensions to bear upon intellectual perplexities and cultural problems. It seeks to provide a means for dialogue among persons who take seriously our present predicament and who believe that analyses of Christian faith and culture, of moral discipline and intellectual judgment, and of confused aspirations and values in contemporary society are essential both to the health of academic communities and to the responsible fulfillment of the vocation of Christian scholars and teachers.

Although a critical approach is stressed, we seek primarily to affirm, not to deny. What we wish to affirm is the idea of wholeness versus fragmentation. We wish to affirm that the world is a creation, open to investigation and learning; that there is a Holy order of meaning in which the search for truth and the concern for its communication is meaningful; that the endeavors of creative thought and academic learning can be renewed by scholarship practiced as a Christian vocation; and that all the various fragments — whether in racial hostilities, enmities between nations, isolations of academic fields, estrangements between persons or between men and God — are broken pieces intended for reconciliation in God's redemptive work in Jesus Christ. The affirmation which is proposed is that God has something immediate and real to do, both in judgment and in love, with all that men attempt in the work of culture and the mind.

We take God seriously and know that this poses serious problems and responsibilities. We share the difficulty of posing the question of God in its relevance for men in a world which has "come of age" — where the affirmations of belief are hard but where there is discontent in unbelief. We sense the common responsibility of pointing to God's presence and action in the midst of intellectual life and scholarly work. By relating Christian belief to the world of learning, all areas of knowledge can become avenues for encounter with truth, and faith can be held as a way of understanding. Though the Christian scholar does not have programmatic precision, he can serve God and the world meaningfully through study pursued as a vocation. His own life can become a vocation.

As Christians, we believe in freedom of the mind. This is the freedom to rigorously inquire after knowledge in all fields and to interpret what is learned as the truth itself demands. It is the freedom of respecting the relative autonomy of secular disciplines. At the same time it is the freedom for the Christian thinker to make clear that what is known through intellectual endeavor has its ultimate meaning as a worldly matter in the light of God's providence. Thus the freedom which is insisted upon as grounded in faith is freedom to pursue all knowledge and to place that pursuit in a framework fashioned by God. Beneath such freedom there is a confident trust — an assurance that the faithful scholar is accepted of God. That confidence in turn is based upon God's faithfulness, the source of our final justification.

The Christian Scholar is published four times each year by the Commission on Higher Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. and is associated closely with the Faculty Christian Fellowship. Its editorial policies, operations, and judgments are determined by the community of Christian scholars who constitute its Editorial Board and staff.

J. EDWARD DIRKS, *Editor*
for the Editorial Board.

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VOLUME XLIII

SUMMER 1960

NUMBER 2

The Christian Scholar is published four times each year by the Commission on Higher Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. It is printed in Belgium by Imprimerie Georges Thone and distributed to retail outlets by Bernhard DeBoer, Bloomfield, New Jersey. Copyright 1960 under the Berne Convention. All correspondence should be addressed to the Editor, *The Christian Scholar*, 475 Riverside Drive, New York 27, New York.

Subscription rates are: one year \$5.00, two years \$9.00, three years \$12.00; student rates, each year \$3.00; foreign rates are the same; ten to forty-nine subscriptions to a single address, each \$3.00; fifty or more subscriptions to a single address, each \$2.50; any single copy \$1.25; ten to forty-nine copies, each \$1.00; fifty or more copies, each 75¢.

Previous volumes of *The Christian Scholar* are available in microfilm to subscribers only from University Microfilms, 313 North First Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

The type-face for the front cover is Hammer Unziale designed by Victor Hammer.

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Notes on Contingency

by the Editorial Associate

In six years of publication *The Christian Scholar* has received all degrees of praise and every variety of criticism. The Editorial Board itself spends a major part of each meeting in radical criticism of its own work. Especially over the past three years we have tried to rethink the general purposes of this journal and the possibilities of fulfilling its responsibilities to the community of Christians in higher education who are attempting to address themselves to their work in terms of a distinctly Christian perspective.

Often we are criticized for being too "neo-Orthodox"; this ranges from a rejection of our concern for the biblical tradition and its relevance to modern culture to a more sophisticated suspicion that we are nurturing dead dogmas under new guise. It is impossible to give these criticisms the respect due them in so summary a fashion. They sometimes come from good scholars and Christians. Partly in consequence, the Editorial Board's executive committee met with several responsible critics just two years ago to discuss these and other questions, and the whole enterprise was freshened by the insights which came from this exploration of what we have been and should be doing.

From another quarter we receive a similar criticism: too "Liberal." Do we really take the Christian faith

seriously in all this or is it just a thin veneer for an attempted recovery of a religious attitude which can justify human intellectual values? Do we actually bring Christian insights to bear when it counts? This kind of question is addressed to us most recently in the *Westminster Theological Journal*, May 1959, in an article entitled "The Christian Scholar" by Dr. Cornelius Van Til, Professor of Apologetics in the Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia.

Professor Van Til, a distinctly conservative Reformed theologian, has written in his article the first survey of this journal known to us. It is primarily focused upon the articles which we have published by Dr. George H. Williams, "The Christian College Today," Autumn 1958 (and other articles in that special issue on "The Vocation of the Christian College"), and by Dr. William H. Poteat, "The Incarnate Word and the Language of Culture," June 1956 (and an earlier article in March 1954). His survey and critique of these articles in some ways is a model of conciseness and accuracy in representing the views of others. But he is convinced that neither the authors nor the editors approach their problems from an adequate theological standpoint and that they do not offer the scholar the help needed in understanding the Christian faith or in relating the Christian faith to the work of

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scholarship. Thus he brings our attention again to the reason for this journal's existence.

One of the primary reasons that *The Christian Scholar* is published is to encourage fruitful conversations among scholars in two directions at least: the dialogue between Christian Faith and the daily work of learning and teaching; and the dialogue between scholars who differ as to how this can be done and as to what understanding of the gospel is valid in this undertaking.

There are inevitably certain requirements which the participants must honor in order to carry on this conversation. Most of all they must take each other seriously enough to respond in terms of the other's intent, the limitations which he set for himself, and the audience which he was addressing. It may be that one is speaking to a different question than the other, and this must be acknowledged if total frustration is to be avoided by both conversants. And further it is helpful to admit, as is usually the case, that the other person is speaking from a position which has its intellectual attractions, may be viable to some extent, and has in all probability been shared by Christians of integrity.

The other side of this is that there are evident barriers to such a conversation. One may be right and the other wrong, but this is rarely so clear cut that a legitimate ultimatum may be delivered by either one to the other. Is it ever the case that either may have nothing to learn from the other? To so estimate a particular conversation is to stop it. Another successful way to turn a con-

versation into tandem monologues is to reduce the other's argument to a simple position which is obviously refutable. This will rarely be convincing.

Turning to Professor Van Til's critique of this journal then, let me say first of all that I do not wish here to affirm or rebut any substantive position he takes, but to consider his article as illustrative of the requirements for the conversation and the barriers which often arise without necessity. I will then raise some questions about his epistemology. And finally I will suggest how fruitful the Christian claims may yet be for continuing this dialogue.

First of all, Van Til's summary of Williams' five motifs for bringing Christian history to bear upon current university problems is phenomenally brief without loss of the central outline of each motif. When he turns to assess Williams' contribution however, his initial remark is that the author wishes to "quietly drop the Fall 'as an historic narrative' and also quietly drop the Fall 'as it might affect a Christian doctrine of knowing'" in order not on principle to separate human *scientia* (empirical knowledge) from divine revelation. From this statement we might wonder whether Van Til recorded facts in his summaries without their meaning having registered with him. For the most obvious intention of Williams' article was to develop the significance of the Fall for the understanding of the Christian's intellectual work and his participation in the academic community. A critic may believe that "there is no evidence to show that Williams has been able, any

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more than any one else, to identify Jesus Christ as the one through whom the Christian scholar can find meaning in the subjects that require his analysis." But Williams had very carefully presented the case to the contrary, focusing the reader's attention upon one facet after another of the relevance to his own intellectual work of "the biblical-theological theme of fallen reason and *sapientia* restored by grace."

Van Til's criticisms may have some validity, but I would hesitate to say that he exercises the "epistemological clarity" which he requires of others. Indeed his entire objection rests not upon Williams' argument but upon an illustration. Williams chose his own field of study to illustrate how it might be fruitful to reflect "upon Martin Luther's famous dictum in the ethical realm, characterizing the Christian justified by faith as *simul justus et peccator*," as it would bear upon "each Protestant Christian in the context of the university as *simul certus et dubitator*" or as *simul praescitus et scrutator*. "The Christian teacher or student is at once foreknown of God (*praescitus*) and a researcher (*scrutator*) of God's ways among men and in creation at large." He then used the phrase "luminous particularity" to indicate how the interests of a church historian both overlap and to some degree depart from the interests of other historians. Van Til takes the phrase "luminous particularity," applies it to the quite different questions of Christology, and finds that this principle cannot be used to identify "anything like an unambiguous revelation of the sovereign God to

man"; thus proving, he says, that Williams' position "constitutes no basic advance over that of Plato" in that "there is nothing to indicate that for Williams Jesus Christ is anything more than a symbol for *Veritas*." With a quote from Emerson the argument is then turned on transcendentalism.

It is not evident that Van Til has engaged in discussion with the author in terms of his actual argument. The reasons for this may be many, but attention will be given especially to two. One is the very depressing misunderstanding of the context in which we published Williams' address. The second seems to be the assumption of a Cartesian stance of objectivity toward historical events and individuals. This latter however is a vehicle through which Van Til also makes a criticism of more substance.

First of all, this journal is not out to make a case for a particular theological position. We receive and invite articles from scholars whose orientations range throughout the theological spectrum, including those whose thoughts may contribute to the Christian's understanding but who make no Christian claim themselves and disavow any theological position. At the present time, may we note, it is increasingly difficult to find articles which contribute to the general enterprise from capable scholars who still represent either side of the modernist — fundamentalist controversy of past years (or the more recent opposition of liberal and neo-Orthodox).

Furthermore we do not conceive our task in terms of making points for

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Christianity. But we do assume that the Christian faith is true and meaningful for every aspect of intellectual endeavor. Professor Williams for example was addressing a convocation of Christian delegates from Christian colleges before whom he felt no need to defend or prove the Christian Faith. His interest and theirs and ours was to explore the possible relations between their Christian Faith and their responsibilities in higher education. And this is one of the kinds of dialogue which we exist to encourage: not a monologue in which we prove the other person or viewpoint to be logically absurd, but an open conversation *with* each other, in which is maintained the respect due between scholars for the insights of others in the common endeavor to understand and elucidate reality.

Professor Van Til is an irenic scholar. But his criticisms of Williams not only ignore the context of his remarks; he also seeks answers to questions not even raised in that context. Failing to find what he wishes, he then proceeds to identify Williams with various ideas and philosophers which also failed to address themselves to the same questions and can thus easily be proved inadequate. This does not contribute to understanding and tends to stop what could prove to be a fruitful conversation.

On the other hand there is something in Van Til's criticism which should be heard with care by Christian scholars today. The upsurge of interest in the relation of Christ and culture, which resulted in *The Christian Scholar*,

the Faculty Christian Fellowship, and many other efforts in this field, has met with serious resistance to the specific doctrines that are held in common by the community of Christians. And generally speaking, in our pages as elsewhere, the Christians at work in higher education have avoided dealing directly with the central Christian teaching, the Atonement of Christ. Who was Jesus Christ and what did God do in him? If the church has always hesitated to answer this question dogmatically (that is, by an agreed statement of doctrine), that may be a measure of its significance. For no one can take the Christian Faith seriously, even as a curious spectator, without returning constantly to this question.

Professor Williams included in his article the statement that "the Christian scholar must face up to the fact that the central doctrine of the Church, the Atonement — with all its doctrinal, sacramental, and constitutional explication — is ultimately implicated in any casual or accommodative decision he might make about the paradisiac motif in the realm of epistemology." But he draws out these implications only within the limits of the doctrines of creation and the fall, not in terms of incarnation and atonement, resurrection and reconciliation. But is it enough to relate creation and fall to the intellectual community unless you are going to bring your labor to fruition in terms of the redemption in Christ of the same community? Van Til has pointed out here a major weakness in our work. It is hoped that Williams will bring the

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fruit of his historical studies to bear upon the implications of the new being, which the Christian scholar has from Christ, for his work in the community of learning. It is also hoped that positive suggestions will be forthcoming from Van Til¹ who could contribute much at this point. Indeed who of us can long put off this question?

The question of the person and work of Jesus Christ is a personal puzzle to many in the academic community especially because it involves the query: *what happened?* We are acutely aware today of how difficult it is to really pin down any historical fact. It is this experience which dominates the history of ideas of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. Although we may not have studied the reflective thinking of our recent forefathers in the intellectual life, its fruits are evident in recent events. A note of both recognition and despair for all of us was struck by George Orwell when he said to Arthur Koestler (both of whom had been involved in the Spanish revolution), "History stopped in 1936." Orwell had noticed early in life that no event is ever correctly reported in a newspaper. But during the Spanish Civil War, he says,

I saw newspaper reports which did not bear any relation to the facts, not even the relationship which is implied in an ordinary lie. . . . This kind of thing is frightening to me, because it often gives me the feeling that the very concept of objective truth is fading out of the world. . . . I am willing to believe that history is for the most part inaccurate and biased, but what is peculiar to our own age is the abandon-

ment of the idea that history *could* be truthfully written.¹

There are several kinds of responses a man can make to this experience. He can succumb to complete nihilism before the flux of history. He can deny that the sands are shifting and secure himself in an absolute metaphysical principle. He can work through the problem, testing and probing for what is valid and enduring in his experience of reality.

It is very difficult to converse seriously today with anyone who has not yet sensed that his grasp upon historical reality may not be perfectly secure or who has had this experience but rejects it as not significant. I wonder however whether this does not weaken Van Til's critique of *The Christian Scholar*. The impression is inescapable that he has never been through the Spanish Civil War or anything so shattering to human certitude as was that experience for modern man, that he somehow skipped over the nineteenth century and all that it meant to us for metaphysical uncertainty. Descartes seems too much with him, as if no epistemological questions have been raised by all these centuries of human experience, and indeed as if Cartesian methodology perhaps reflects the categories of biblical thought.

In another essay Van Til sums up his own position in these words:

A consistent Christianity . . . is controlled, at every point, by the pre-

¹George Orwell, "Looking Back on the Spanish War," *A Collection of Essays*. New York: Doubleday Anchor Book, 1954, pp. 202-4.

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suppositions of the existence of the self-sufficient God of which the Bible speaks. It is upon the basis of this presupposition alone, the Reformed Faith holds, that predication of any sort at any point has relevance and meaning. . . . The possibility of science and philosophy as well as the possibility of theology presupposes the idea of a God whose counsel determines "whatsoever comes to pass." Only then has the spectre of brute fact and ultimate irrationality been slain.²

Perhaps therefore we can say that after all he has experienced the flux of history, as we have, but he has rejected it. He claims a principle (the self-sufficient God) in history (the Bible) which is not contingent. From this archimedean point all other history can be read as being already completely intelligibly given by causal relationship, by inner necessity.

In the Bible however God is represented not only as being self-sufficient but also as taking an active part in the affairs of his people. He even suffers at their hands and dies for their sins. The mystery of the Atonement is exactly the paradox of the self-sufficient God suffering for his people. Van Til resolves this classic Christian mystery by finding a portion of history (Jesus Christ) or a historical document (the Bible) which does not participate in the realm of contingency, the flux of history. Is not this position in direct conflict with the Bible itself? Would it not void the passion of Jesus Christ

of all meaning to people who worry, suffer, and die today?

This can be illustrated in another way. Van Til insists on sole reliance upon the facticity of an event for understanding it, assuming with Descartes the epistemological distinction of subject and object. Are such facts available to anyone however, whether eye-witness or not?

The nineteenth century brought the most radical philosophical questioning of our knowledge and of our means of knowing anything. (This accounts for Van Til's preoccupation with Kant.) Thus it is characteristic of us today to ask not only for the facts, but also how we can verify the facts, and even how we can validate our means of verification. Knowledge has become a more personal quest. We have been forced to reassess the character of the historical process and of our own ego-involvement in it.

Therefore I would ask Van Til whether it is any longer meaningful, if it ever was, to inspect and judge assertions as true or false unless the person is also willing to further question the means by which he made his decision. It is at this point that history and thought becomes personal and not merely something which we may stand off from and objectively measure, as with an absolute perspective of "clear and distinct ideas." Must we not today speak of *reality* as we participate in it and *truth* as it involves us in itself? Historical statements usually tell us as much about the observing subject as about the object observed.

If this gives history the appearance of

²Cornelius Van Til, *Christianity and Idealism*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1955, pp. 138-9. Cf. also his *The New Modernism*.

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shifting sands, it may mean that certain types of logical constructs are no longer useful for gaining knowledge of historical events or persons and that some claims for absolute knowledge are simply meaningless.

The dialectic of memory and reason in biblical criticism is a case in point; contemporary biblical scholarship has discarded as useless some approaches to the events related in Scripture and has sought and in some cases found ways for modern men to read the Bible meaningfully, that is, with acknowledgement that our experience is contingent between knower and known. Indeed it is the glory of Protestantism that its biblical scholars have inspected the Scriptures at least as closely as other historians normally scrutinize the documentation of any other events in world history. The results have often come as shocks to portions of the Christian community. But it is a sign of relevant life when any community engages in the vigorous dialectic between faithful memory of significant events and the curious reason of modern man. This effort of scholars to read history with strict honesty relies directly upon the continued pressure to know just who is Jesus Christ and what he did and why.

It is here that Professor William H. Poteat has contributed a valuable prolegomenon to the questions involved for a modern intellectual in the Atonement of Jesus Christ. "I shall try to suggest some lines of attack without presuming to do more," he says, but it is rare to find a more fruitful suggestion than this:

The *Incarnate Word* introduces into language as it is used — and thereby into thought and thus into action and hence finally into culture, which is itself a practical unification of languages — a new set of categories which transforms its very fabric.

It is this fact which makes the whole of Western Civilization possible and gives it so many of its determinative characteristics.

Words like "nature," "to be," "know," "faith," "freedom," "tragedy" — to name but a few — can never be used again in quite the same way.¹

Van Til devotes about half of his critique to Poteat's article, "The Incarnate Word and the Language of Culture," from which we have quoted. If he can challenge the orthodoxy of this statement, it is only by ignoring the clear distinctions Poteat makes between the linguistic usage of "the Christ" as a symbol and Christ the non-symbolic reality with whom our language tries to deal. On the other hand it may be that he must dismiss the true intent of this article because it does certainly imply a positive estimate of creation and culture which cannot be destroyed by man's sin. Poteat puts this very well when he finds that the most acute problems arise for the philosopher if he is a Christian and therefore believes

that Jesus Christ, begotten before all worlds, was not a tribal deity or a culture-hero, but was *Lord of all*. . . . If, as a Christian, you occupy a standpoint which is in principle committed to relating itself positively to all other

¹Cf. also Charles N. Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*.

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standpoints, if you are systematically under the obligation of finding a place in the scheme of things for all other systems of thought, standpoints, or categories because you believe that Jesus Christ is Lord of all, then you have philosophical perplexities that others do not have! You cannot for example say of any world-view, system of categories, or kind of proposition that it is absolutely meaningless! You cannot dismiss the philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre or Martin Heidegger, Wittgenstein, or J. L. Austin as simply wrong! You cannot recoil from the painting of Juan Gris or the poetry of E. E. Cummings as being of no account. . . . For on principle all these things have meaning; they speak to him who believes that Jesus Christ is Lord of all. Christ is God's, and ye are Christ's, and therefore all these things are yours! They are yours both as a gift and as a perplexity. You have to ask: "What do they mean in the Providence of God?"

It is our common experience along with Van Til to expect that the gifts of God will be clear and distinct and not

add to our burdens any new perplexity. But is this not because we are reading Scripture for answers to our own questions in our own categories only? The requirement of "an unambiguous revelation of the sovereign God to man" may be another way of avoiding God's question to man, an address to us which may very well play havoc with our questions and our categories. The biblical fact that Jesus himself went generally unrecognized as the Christ during his own lifetime should at least give us pause in trying to assess the implications of the Incarnation and the Atonement for intellectual work.

All this is merely to say that there is still much to be learned by anyone today who will address himself anew to the questions of what is the reality and what is the meaning of saying

The Word became flesh . . .

"Man Picking Wheat" by Ben Shahn is reproduced on our cover by courtesy of the William Hayes Fogg Art Museum of Harvard University, from the Meta and Paul J. Sachs Collection.

Acknowledgment is gratefully made to the artist, Ben Shahn, for permission to reproduce his drawings on the cover and with his article, and also to The Downtown Gallery for the drawing on page 98, to *Harper's Magazine* for the drawing on page 101, to Pantheon Books, Inc. for the drawing on page 106 which was originally published in *The Alphabet of Creation* by Ben Shahn, and to John McAndrew for the drawing on page 110.

The editors wish to call attention to the Church Society for College Work on its twenty-fifth anniversary. The Church Society is an independent organization of members of the Protestant Episcopal Church dedicated to the continuing mission of the Church within colleges and universities. The Church Society is especially concerned to encourage the churches to think of their college work in terms of the whole college community, in terms of faculty and administration and graduate students in addition to their interest in undergraduates. In recent years the Church Society has developed a series of valuable experiments and pioneer projects in some of the more neglected areas of the Church's responsibility, both to listen and to speak, in what is going on in the heart of the university.

The Secular Historian Today

MARJORIE REEVES

Why do historians today engage in the activity of increasing historical knowledge and communicating it? In Europe at least, history is a large and flourishing academic "industry," especially if you include history of literature, art, science, etc. The numbers engaged in it are great, and the increase in the army of historical researchers is matched by the output in books and articles and the new crop of learned periodicals. (As an aside, we may well ask: Is this an enthusiasm and an activity more characteristic of Europe than the U.S.A., and particularly characteristic of the Western as opposed to the non-Western world? If so, why?)

I think history supplies a test case in academic studies where we must look for a truly secular motive, i.e., a sense of intrinsic worth which arises from within itself and is not imposed from without. All attempts to justify the activities of historians in utilitarian terms are unconvincing. History as such — the attempt to discover what *has* happened — is not a science which can be directly applied to present problems. It is neither sociology, economics, law, or even politics. Only at one remove — when students of the human sciences make generalisations from a series of historical situations (generalisations in which they extract the common elements from different situations) — does history become "useful" to apply. But then it is no longer the "pure" history of the historians whose characteristic activity is the attempt to reconstruct unique situations.

The typical secular historian of today rejects the simple idea of utility (e.g. learning history to avoid the mistakes of the past) as his driving-force. I think a great many historians would also reject as a main reason for studying history the need to trace back to their roots the causes of our present predicament or situation. Of course history is constantly being used for this purpose today. The urge to examine our roots is a strong and natural one. Many thinkers, trying to analyse our dilemmas of today, turn back to history in order to understand them fully. At this Consultation on "the Meaning of the Secular" there has been constant reference to historical roots of modern movements — but generally not by professional historians. We historians perhaps supply the material: others find there what they are seeking by way of self-explanation. The English historian, Herbert Butterfield, argues that the study of the past simply in order to explain the

Dr. Marjorie Reeves is Vice-Principal of St. Anne's College and Lecturer in History in Oxford University. Miss Reeves is the new chairman of the University Teachers Group of the British Student Christian Movement. Her paper was read to a consultation on "The Meaning of the Secular" at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, Switzerland, September 15-20, 1959. The conference was sponsored by the University Teachers Committee of the World's Student Christian Federation.

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present is the greatest obstacle to historical understanding, for the historian's purpose is the elucidation of differences rather than likenesses. Historians on the whole are not much interested in self-explanation; to make history the hand-maid of self-explanation is to prostitute it.

The Motives

What then? What are the motives inspiring the study of history today? Of course any big industry keeps going partly in its own momentum, perpetually creating tastes and vested interests. History affords a wonderful field for endless Ph.D. theses. But it is far too significant an academic pursuit to be dismissed at such a superficial level.

Many people would say that there is a fundamental human urge to seek an over-all meaning in history, to find a pattern, a direction, a destiny for the human race, to know where the time process is going and what we mean by its End. From the early centuries of the Christian era there have been thinkers attracted to history for this purpose. The mediaeval way of studying history was largely one of plotting its pattern in terms of the Seven Ages and of tracing out the purposes of God behind events. Mediaeval patterns broke down, but we have continued to have the philosophers of history who have sought by establishing a pattern in the past to project it to a conclusion in the future. Philosophers of history such as Hegel, Marx, and Toynbee (though all so different) are, in one sense all "religious" historians, in that they seek to use history to reveal to them the key to human existence and its ultimate meaning.

As against this approach, the typical modern historian is belligerently "secular," in that he rejects all attempts to seek an ultimate or "religious" meaning in history. The cleavage between the professional historian and the philosophers of history is very marked today, and in reaction against "patterns" the historian more and more eschews broad sweeps and concentrates on very detailed studies. It may be almost *any* detail on which he lavishes his care, for the distinction between important and unimportant becomes for him almost meaningless. What can "important" mean in this context? Important because useful, assisting self-explanation, forming a link in a pattern? No — the only importance he will admit is its own intrinsic importance: that it was a *human* event that really happened. (What one might term "animal" and "natural" events only have significance for the historian in so far as they impinge on human events.) In his enthusiastic pursuit of detailed historical events the historian declares that his purpose is simply to get as close as he can to knowing what actually happened. The justification of this activity, he declares, lies solely in the exhilarating sense of worthwhileness which this process of reconstruction brings. Something significant has been done just by recovering (in so far as one is able) a bit of the past — there is no need for any further kind of justification.

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Now whence does this sense of significance derive? I think there is — as in any academic activity — a certain element of the power-urge. That is to say, the desire to “have dominion over” one’s material plays a part in all academic studies. We all know how satisfying it is to analyse, classify, label, reduce to order, until the exhilarating point is reached when one exclaims: “Now I’ve got the whole thing taped and under my hand!” Knowledge as power, in the sense of control over, is surely proper to Man. (Is this not perhaps the symbolic meaning of the Genesis story in which Adam is given dominion over all the animals and names them?) But the idea of knowledge as “power over” has dangerous implications when applied to the study of Man. Can any historian ever claim with any degree of finality to “know” any historical man or situation? If in his arrogance he so claims, he is riding for a fall. The great temptation is to make history say what you want it to say, to re-make history in your own image. This urge to get power over the past and force it to bolster up your own ego or your own system can attack individuals, groups, or nations, and we have seen some terrible manifestations of it in our time. Now whatever else may be wrong with him, it is surely significant and encouraging that the ordinary historian knows this quite unequivocally to be a sin. Secular historians everywhere in the name of Truth have reacted sharply against this kind of distortion. They know their calling is to explore the past, not to control it.

This does not mean that they are so naive as to deny the existence of this power-urge in themselves and others or to pretend that they are not bounded and conditioned by the time and place in which they live. “The subjectivity of the historian” — our noses have been so deeply and so often rubbed in this notion that we are unlikely to forget it. Yet still I would declare that the foundation-stone of the historian’s position, the core of belief that gives meaning to all he does is his affirmation that real encounter with the “other” past is possible and worthwhile. Of course he starts from a conditioned position; of course there are concealed assumptions or value-judgments which influence his selection of material and his emphases. But his experience teaches him that there is a reality over against him which he can truly encounter, even if his own blind spots make some aspects of it invisible to him. Moreover it has a “come-back”; it can smash up preconceived patterns or concepts and force the historian to reform his ideas altogether. The relativity and partiality are in oneself, the historian; the sense of meaning which is so exhilarating lies in the real objective historical situation which clamours to be known, even if relatively and partially.

Secular Affirmations

My main contention therefore is that the activity of the secular historian today rests on two affirmations — though often he does not formulate them as such:

(1) The possibility of what I have called "real encounter" with the past.

(2) The intrinsic worthwhileness of every human situation — and therefore of the attempt to reconstruct it — and the enrichment to present living which comes from extending one's range of known human situations.

Real life limits the possibilities of extending our range; history offers extensions almost without limit, except those of time and capacity. The sense of worth is not really related to the size or importance, either to contemporaries or succeeding generations, of the events studied. One can get just as excited when two little bits of local and domestic history dovetail together as when one stumbles on a new clue to national policies. The sense of worth lies in the uniqueness of the situation and the excitement of resurrecting it, of making dead bones live.

I have been trying to describe the kind of feelings and excitements which move us. Though most of my colleagues would not accept this, I should speak of "the historian's *faith*." It is a faith common to Christian and non-Christian historians; it is in a sense a secular faith, in that it springs from the way we regard our material and not from any one metaphysical framework of meaning into which we may choose to place history. I suppose there is a concealed metaphysic in my statements, but the point I am trying to make is that there is a community of understanding among historians, a shared sense of meaningfulness in what we do which is quite irrespective of the several religious faiths or philosophies which we may hold. In this sense we are all secularists and the defence of our secularism is part of our common faith as historians.

. . . under Pontius Pilate

At the level of sharing together in a great activity and of setting our faces against certain "sins" against our faith, we are united. Do I then become divisive if I say to my secular colleagues: "I want to go further in describing and identifying this common faith of ours?" The Christian description of what the secular historian is doing which I want to give would run something like this:

History is the field of God's encounter with Man. Every situation we analyse has within it this element of confrontation and of choice, whether by individuals or groups of men. The unique particularities of history have been made meaningful by this fact of God's encounter with Men. Moreover this sense of meaning has been confirmed by God's once-for-all

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entry into the particularity of history in a dateable life and a death *sub Pontio Pilato*. This is why we feel so passionately about the intrinsic worth of our material and why we hate blurring uniqueness in half-true generalisation.

Such statements must divide the Christian from the secular historian who is likely to reply politely, "Now you *are* forcing us into a given framework," or rudely, "What absurd nonsense!" But the point I would insist on is that this is an attempt at a theological understanding of *what we both do*.

If the conversation did not break off sharply at that point I would go on to hazard these further reflections:

1. The presence of God in history accounts for the element of mystery which we so often feel in our studies. We are aware that, however far we push our analyses or widen our imagination, we shall never wholly "know" a human situation. There will always be further depths in it which we cannot plumb. So our conclusions are always provisional and the best historians are always those that admit most freely the limits of their knowledge. This proper humility of the historian has its root ultimately in a sense of human mystery which is really the mystery of God in history.

2. The historian today hesitates to pass sweeping or absolute judgments on historical personages or actions. He may give opinions but he will not "sit in judgment." Is not the root of this the feeling that we all in some sense "stand under judgment"? The Christian adds: under the judgment of God.

3. Whence do we derive this sense of responsibility towards our material which makes it a sin to falsify or distort it? Is it not the sacredness of our material — the presence of God in history — which impels us, without knowing it, to seek the highest possible degree of truth? Do we not also feel a sense of responsibility towards the actual people we study which makes more sense if we regard them as alive in God rather than dead in the past?

. . . for its own sake

I have been attempting a theological explanation of the experience of secular historians today. The point I want to drive home is that when history is studied, not for any extraneous purpose, but for itself alone, it becomes a spiritual experience in its own right. We Christians may and must try to explain it theologically, but we interfere with the reality of the encounter and therefore with the quality of the experience if we seek to impose on the historian any other duty than that of trying to understand the past — not in order to prove anything, nor to draw any lessons, not even directly to show forth the works of God — but simply for its own sake. This is a true *secular* study, and as such I believe it is blessed by God.

If I may add a footnote, it seems to me that a definition of our true secular task as teachers of history follows from that of our position as students of history.

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The teaching situation is a triangular one — of teacher, student, and subject-matter. If we have in any degree experienced the absorbing thrill of real encounter in our research, our aim will be above all to make real the encounter of the student. The highest moments therefore of our teaching come when we have succeeded in concentrating our own and our students' attention wholly on the subject-matter, to the exclusion momentarily of every other consideration, even that of our own relationship to them. This "losing of self" is again a spiritual experience in its own right, as no one will deny who has watched a group of students wholly absorbed in listening to a great scholar. In this entire concentration we do not exclude God — for, as I have argued, he is there already; but we serve him, I believe, more fully at *that moment* by serving our subject-matter with all our powers of understanding, imagination, openness, and humility than by "dragging him in." Our conscious witness to our faith belongs to other moments.

Thus both in research and teaching there is a type of single-minded secularity which I believe Christians must help to safeguard, recognizing here a spiritual quality which may be found in Christian and non-Christian alike. We may perhaps be serving the purposes of God better by accepting the liberation of the academic, by admitting that his flame burns more freely when unenclosed, than by trying to reconstruct around him the framework of a new orthodoxy. The insights which come from piecemeal and fragmentary encounters may sometimes show us truth unperceived in high systems.

Artists in Colleges

BEN SHAHN

I have come to Harvard with some very serious doubts as to whether I ought to be here at all.

I am a painter; I am not a lecturer about art nor a scholar of art. It is my chosen role to paint pictures, not to talk about them.

What can any artist bring to the general knowledge or the theoretical view of art that has not already been fully expounded? What can he say in words that he could not far more skillfully present in pictorial form? Is not the painting rather than the printed page his testament? Will he not only expend his energies without in any way increasing the general enlightenment? And then, what can an audience gain from listening to an artist that it could not apprehend far more readily simply by looking at his pictures?

Here are a few of the honest questions, and I have tried to meet them with honest answers.

Perhaps the most pertinent of the questions has been as to just what I can accomplish by such a verbal Odyssey as this series of discussions promises to be. My personal answer has been that the need to formulate clearly those things which I think may be of some value to me and that the process will be interesting. But what about you?

From the point of view of both the audience and the university I can only suggest that the venture will probably prove about as worthy as the ideas will be good.

But there is a further reason for my being particularly interested in being here, and undertaking some such discussions. Within the past few years there has developed an increased interest in art within the universities with the promise — the possibility at least — that they may come to constitute the new art community. Such a prospect has so much to recommend it, so much in the way of intellectual stimulation for art, in the way of values and perhaps of sympathetic climate, that one hopes it may be realized.

At the same time, there is always the possibility that art may be utterly stifled within the university atmosphere, that the creative impulse may be wholly obliterated by the pre-eminence of criticism and scholarship. Nor is there perfect unanimity on the part of the university itself as to whether the presence of artists

Mr. Ben Shahn is one of the greatest of contemporary American artists. This article is the first of his Charles Eliot Norton Lectures at Harvard University and is reprinted by permission of the publishers from his book, *The Shape of Content*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, Copyright 1957 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College.

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will be salutary within its community, or whether indeed art itself is a good solid intellectual pursuit and therefore a proper university study.

Such questions have been the subject of extensive conferring and surveying within the past few years, of changing attitudes on the part of the colleges and of heated disagreement; for the whole problem of creativity often reaches into basic educational philosophy and sometimes into university policy itself.

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I have a number of observations to make on this possible forthcoming alignment. They are not all of them optimistic, but they are based upon considerable familiarity on my part with the art-university relationship in process. They are made in the hope that something really fruitful may emerge and that some of the existing misconceptions and maladjustments may be erased. They are made particularly in the hope that the student who happens to be a young person of talent and ability in art may no longer be caught between two impossible choices; the one whether to gain a liberal education at the cost of losing his creative habit, the other to sacrifice his liberal education in order to gain an adequate training in art.

But let us ask what possible interest the university as such can have in art? In what way can art possibly augment its perspective?

There is first the question of the educated man; and then I think there is the rather flat fact of which we are all most uncomfortably aware, that our average university graduate emerges from his years of study as something less than an educated man or woman. He is likely to be most strikingly wanting in the accomplishment of perceptivity, in the noncurricular attributes of sensitiveness and of consideration toward all those finer arts which are generally conceded to have played a great part in the humanizing of man. And our graduate is not unlikely to display total blindness with regard to painting itself.

Nowhere do his limitations become so conspicuous as in his contacts with Europeans of similar background and education. For the European, whatever his shortcomings in other directions, will be perfectly conversant with the art and literature of his own country as well as with that of others. It is not at all improbable that he will know considerably more about American art than will the American himself. Today, in view of our increasing commerce with European countries, this art-blindness of ours tends to become not just a cultural gap, but even something of a diplomatic hazard.

François Mauriac has said of us: "It is not what separates the United States from the Soviet Union that should frighten us, but what they have in common . . . those two technocracies that think themselves antagonists, are dragging humanity in the same direction of de-humanization . . . man is treated as a means and no longer as an end — this is the indispensable condition of the two cultures that face each other."

Jean-Paul Sartre has said, "If France allows itself to be influenced by the whole of American culture, a living and livable situation there will come here and completely shatter our cultural traditions . . ."

In England, V. S. Pritchett wrote of us, "Why they should not be originally creative is puzzling. It is possible that the lack of the organic sense, the conviction that man is a machine — turns them into technicians and cuts them off from the chaos, the accidents and intuitions of the creative process?"

I do not agree with any one of these opinions, but I believe that they do

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serve to demonstrate the uneasy view that is taken of us by a few very eminent Europeans.

But that uneasy view is not confined to European countries. There have arisen some complaints on the domestic scene also, and some from very unexpected sources. A leading executive, for instance, of one of our really vast industries undertook a circuit through a number of American universities a year or so ago with only this in view: to persuade the colleges to do a better job of educating their graduates. He asked that the liberal arts be re-emphasized; he pointed out that, while technical, scientific, and other specialized training has been very advanced, there has been lacking a quality of imagination, a human view of things, which is as necessary to industry and business as is technical training.

I think that many universities today are seeking to counteract such over-emphasis upon technological education and are beginning to re-emphasize liberal education. I note a great increase, at least I think I do, in serious theater, in exhibitions of painting and sculpture, in the loan of art to students, in publications of diverse sorts but of a serious nature. I think all this activity represents an intelligent effort to place the student in a cultured and creative environment rather than to inject culture into him hypodermically, so to speak, via the specific, required, and necessarily limited classroom course.

Besides the practical objective of producing a better-educated graduate, one who may meet the new need for the international citizen, the university has other possible objectives in extending its hand toward art, these both philosophical and generous.

It has become obvious that art itself in America is without what might be called a natural environment. Art and artists often exist within a public climate that is either indifferent or hostile to their profession. Or otherwise they may concentrate within small colonies wherein they find a sort of self-protection and self-affirmation. The art colonies are severely limited in the variety of experience and opinion which they can contribute to art. They become almost monastic in the degree of their withdrawal from common society; and thus their art product becomes increasingly ingrown, tapping less and less the vital streams of common experience, rejecting more and more the human imperatives which have propelled and inspired art in past times. By bringing art into the circle of humanistic studies, some of the universities consciously intend to provide for it a sympathetic climate, and one in which there will naturally be found sources of stimulation, of lore, of intellectual material, and even of that element of controversy on which art thrives so well.

Philosophically, I daresay such a policy will be an item in the general objective of unifying the different branches of study toward some kind of a whole culture. I think that it is highly desirable that such diverse fields as, let us say, physics, or mathematics, come within the purview of the painter, who may amazingly enough find in them impressive visual elements or principles. I think

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that it is equally desirable that the physicist or mathematician come to accept into his hierarchy of calculable things that nonmeasurable and extremely random human element which we commonly associate only with poetry or art. Perhaps we may move again toward that antique and outmoded ideal — the whole man.

Such, I think, is the university's view and objective in embracing the arts however cautiously it may proceed. But the artist's view must also be considered and the question of whether the university will become his natural habitat or will spell his doom. This highly debatable point has its implications for all the creative arts within the university, as well as for the artist-teacher, the artist-in-residence, and by all means, the artist-student.



The first observation to be made here is the rather obvious one that art has its roots in real life. Art may affirm its life-giving soil or repudiate it wholly. It may mock as bitterly as did Goya, be partisan, as was Daumier, discover beauty within the sordid and real as did Toulouse-Lautrec. Art may luxuriate in life

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positively and affirmatively with Renoir, or Matisse, or Rubens, or Vermeer. It may turn to the nebulous horizons of sense-experience with the Post-Impressionists, the Cubists, the various orders of Abstractionist, but in any case it is life itself as it chances to exist that furnishes the stimulus for art.

That is not to say any special branch or section of life. Any living situation in which an artist finds material pertinent to his own temper is a proper situation for art. It would not have made sense for Paul Klee to have followed the boxing circuit nor for George Bellows to have chased the vague creatures that lurk within lines and squares or to have pursued the innuendoes of accidental forms which yielded so much treasure to Klee. Yet each of these artists found in such casual aspects of reality a form of life, a means to create an *œuvre*, to build a language of himself, his peculiar wit and skill and taste and comprehension of things.

While I concede that almost every situation has its potential artist, that someone will find matter for imagery almost anywhere, I am generally mistrustful of contrived situations, that is, situations peculiarly set up to favor the blossoming of art. I feel that they may vitiate the sense of independence which is present to some degree in all art. One wonders how the Fauvres would have fared without the Bourgeoisie, how Cézanne would have progressed if he had been cordially embraced by the Academy. I am plagued by an exasperating notion: What if Goya, for instance, had been granted a Guggenheim, and then, completing that, had stepped into a respectable and cozy teaching job in some small — but advanced! — New England college, and had thus been spared the agonies of the Spanish Insurrection? The unavoidable conclusion is that we would never have had "Los Caprichos" or "Los Desastres de la Guerra." The world would not have been called upon to mourn for the tortured woman of the drawing inscribed "Because She Was a Liberal!" Nor would it have been stirred by Goya's pained cry, "Everywhere It Is The Same!" Neither would it have been shocked by his cruel depictions of human bestiality, nor warned — so graphically, so unforgettably — that fanaticism is man's most abominable trait.

Thus it is not unimaginable that art arises from something stronger than stimulation or even inspiration — that it may take fire from something closer to provocation, that it may not just turn to life, but that it may at certain times be compelled by life. Art almost always has its ingredient of impudence, its flouting of established authority, so that it may substitute its own authority and its own enlightenment.

How many ponderous tracts have been written upon those drips and threads of paint by which the late Jackson Pollock made himself known! If his peculiar decor has its human dimension, that does not lie within the time-space, the inter-planetary meanings so often ascribed to the work, but rather in the impudence of setting forth such work; the boldness of recognizing the beauty which does reside in such a surface; the executing of it, the insistence upon presenting such effects

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as art. I doubt whether, in a completely benign atmosphere, such an art as Pollock's would have been born; whether it would have produced the degree of shock and opposition which may well have been one of the most stimulating factors in its growth.

So I believe that if the university's fostering of art is only kindly, is only altruistic, it may prove to be also meaningless. If, on the other hand, the creative arts, the branches of art scholarship, the various departments of art are to be recognized as an essential part of education, a part without which the individual will be deemed less than educated, then I suppose that art and the arts will feel that degree of independence essential to them; that they will accept it as their role to create freely — to comment, to outrage perhaps, to be fully visionary and exploratory as is their nature.

Art should be well-subsidized, yes. But the purchase of a completed painting or a sculpture, the commissioning of a mural — or perhaps the publication of a poem or a novel or the production of a play — all these forms of recognition are the rewards of mature work. They are not to be confused with the setting up of something not unlike a nursery school in which the artist may be spared any conflict, any need to strive quite intently toward command of his medium and his images; in which he may be spared even the need to make desperate choices among his own values and his wants, the need to reject many seeming benefits or wishes. For it is through such conflicts that his values become sharpened; perhaps it is only through such conflicts that he comes to know himself at all.

It is only within the context of real life than an artist (or anyone) is forced to make such choices. And it is only against a background of hard reality that choices count, that they affect a life and carry with them that degree of belief and dedication and, I think I can say, spiritual energy that is a primary force in art. I do not know whether that degree of intensity can exist within the university; it is one of the problems which an artist must consider if he is to live there or work there.

So the answers to the question — Is it possible for an artist to function fully within the university? — must be a series of provisional ones.

Ideally, yes, for as an intellectual center the university can provide background and stimulation to the artist; it can broaden him as an individual; it can conceivably provide new directions for art. All this, if one accepts the thesis that art is an intellectual as well as an emotional process, and that it thus profits by an expanded range of knowledge and experience.

Ideally, yes, for art scholarship itself should provide continuity and perspective for the artist, should enrich his imagery, should in every way complement the creative process by the scholarly one.

Ideally, yes, the artist ought to function well within the university community for it seems desirable that the one-sidedness of the educational pattern be counteracted, and in this sense art has a mission to perform as well as an advantage

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to gain. Yes, too, because within the university art may become familiar to, and accepted by, those young people who will probably constitute the taste-makers of tomorrow, the intellectual leadership, the future audience of art.

Thus, ideally, we may conclude that the university holds great promise for art. Factually, however, there are circumstances which render the prospects less optimistic.



One such circumstance is the record itself of artists who have lived in residence or taught in the universities over a number of years. In the report issued in 1956 by the Committee on the Visual Arts at Harvard University we read the following well-considered lines:

In too many cases, unfortunately, the artist-teacher gradually develops into something else: the teacher who was formerly an artist. Too often the initial basis of appointment was fallacious. In the desire to find an artist who would "get along" with art historians, the depart-

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ment acquired a colleague who got along well enough but turned out to be neither much of an artist nor much of a teacher. Few artists [the report continues] are sufficiently dedicated to teaching to make a career of it. Over a long time, the danger is that the artist will produce less and less art while still preserving the attitude that his teaching is of secondary importance to it.

In support of this observation, I will recount a few instances: I have one friend who has been artist-in-residence at a great Western university for some years. He is well paid. When I first knew him he was a bright light in American art, one of the good names. Full of vigor, imagination, and daring — and good thinking too — he was then producing one impressive canvas after another, and he was beginning to be sought after by collectors and museums. Today he is painting small decorative vignettes, I cannot understand why. One cannot help but observe that his work today reflects what must be polite good taste — a sort of decorator taste — in the small city in which the university is situated. The university itself seems to have absorbed very little of this man's influence. On the walls of his fine studio there still hang a number of his large earlier canvases, a sort of indecorous reminder that he was once a brash and bold young painter.

Such a change may certainly take place in a man for a number of reasons and under all sorts of circumstances, and it would not be fair to attribute it to the academic situation were it not for other similar instances.

I can at the moment recall three other artists each of whom has formerly been prominent in the gallery world. Each is now a university professor, the head of his department, and each is now primarily an administrator and teacher. And in addition to his administrative and teaching work, he undertakes a certain round of promotional duties which seem to us on the outside peculiarly unfitting for an artist. Two of these men have disappeared completely from the gallery world, and I have not seen a picture from the third — to my mind a great artist — for several years.

With all this before me it is small wonder that I have had misgivings as to whether my own present undertaking is a right one. (Actually, I am not very deeply concerned about my own persistence in remaining a painter.) My real concern is for the whole prospect of the artist within the university, for increasingly, and whether for good or ill, the artist is becoming a familiar figure within the university environs. The question of his ability to survive as an artist is not, we might say, wholly academic.

On the basis of fairly extensive observation I have concluded that there are about three major blocks to the development of a mature art and to the artist's continuing to produce serious work within the university situation. And perhaps these major blocks may reach beyond the field of art.

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The first of them is dilettantism. Dilettantism, as we all know, is the non-serious dabbling within a presumably serious field by persons who are ill-equipped — and actually do not even want — to meet even the minimum standard of that field, or study, or practice. Dilettantism in the university is best observed in the so-called "smattering" courses themselves, but it is by no means confined to such academic routine; it is a fairly pervasive attitude.



I understand fully the need to educate broadly. And I understand and applaud that breadth of interest that impels the bright human being to dip into or to investigate all sorts of divergent fields. Obviously there is a contradiction here. For to have a broad acquaintance with a number of different studies means that at least some of these studies cannot be met on a professional level.

I think that the university has met the contradiction fairly successfully in some fields but has certainly not done so in the field of art. For in this field dilettantism governs the whole departmental attitude, whereas in other fields of study the department itself is regarded seriously, however little may be absorbed by the student whose main interest is elsewhere.

I believe that it is an objective of any one of the major departments within the greater universities to constitute in itself a center for its field, so that individuals and institutions in the practical world customarily look to the university for the most advanced work or opinion obtainable. Ideas and leadership then flow out of the university and into general currency. And need I cite the leadership of the universities in such fields as that of physics, of all the branches of sociology and psychology, of archaeology and numerous other fields!

In this connection, the Visual Arts Committee Report comments:

All the timidity that now surrounds the thought of bringing artist and studio into the university, on a par with other fields of scholarship, lately surrounded the same venture with regard to scientists. Just as the

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scientist has found his place within the university, just as his laboratory has become academically respectable, so the artist and studio, given time and opportunity, should find their places. [And the report also says] Though research laboratories in industry and government contribute increasingly to the advancement of fundamental science, the university is still the primary source of the most important scientific progress.

Students then — even those who do not expect to follow a particular field itself — may still derive some sense of its stature and its real meaning. And the individuals who teach and who work under the university aegis are actually working in the center of their field and not on its fringe. Thus the university may be assured of gaining the foremost talent in such studies, while the teacher himself, the physicist-teacher or the sociologist-teacher, let us say, need not be disillusioned nor bored by the level at which his professions exists.

Quite the opposite is true in the field of art, that is, of creative art. In the first place the university directorship is quite likely to look somewhat askance at its art departments and its art courses as somewhat frivolous. (It is not inconceivable that the great public blind spot toward art extends even to such high places.) The student of art in a college is almost required to guard himself against becoming involved or too serious about his art. He will dabble a bit once or twice during a week, but must not and literally can not make of art a field of major interest.

He may be an art-history student, or an architecture or an aesthetics student, in which case he will do a little painting "just," as the saying goes, "to get his hand in." Or a student may display a passionate interest in painting; but even in that event he is still required only to play about lightly. He cannot devote either long hours or concentration to his work. The artist-teacher is thus not able to require or to expect serious work from his students — not even from the talented ones. And thus the level of the work that is produced is likely to arouse in him something akin to physical illness, particularly if he is himself an artist of great capability. And then he must perforce ask himself what he is doing there and why he is not off painting his own pictures.

I cannot understand why there should exist such mistrust of creative work. Is it to guard the student against an incautious degree of self-committal? Or is it indecision as to whether art is really a wholly decorous profession? Or is there some conflict in value as between the art that has already safely taken place and that which — alarmingly enough — may take place?

Some such conflict appears within the Visual Arts Report itself:

[On page 10, for instance, we read] The Committee believes that the visual arts are an integral part of the humanities and as such must assume a role of prominence in the context of higher education. [Yet, on page 66, we find] It is still doubtful if a student at Harvard can find space or time

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to apply himself seriously to creative work in the visual arts. [On page 9, the enlightened comment] At no moment in history since the invention of printing has man's communication with his fellow man been so largely taken over by visual media as today. [But, on page 65, we read the following] We do not propose to inject the art school into the academic life, but rather to give the experience of art its rightful place in liberal education.

I wonder whether the university would also suggest offering the *experience* of calculus, of solid state physics; the experience of French or German; the experience of economics, of medieval history, of Greek.

I was one of those asked to give an opinion concerning the desirability of the university for the education of an artist. I expressed preference for the university as against the professional art school. But my rejection of the art school was certainly not on the grounds of its professionalism; indeed that is the one thing that recommends it. My preference for the university is based upon a belief that the very content of the liberal education is a natural content of art, that art will profit by and greatly needs the content of liberal education. Further, that the humanities and the humanistic view have been the companions of art during the great periods of both.

But if dilettantism is to pervade the whole atmosphere of art, and even the very department in which it is taught, then, far from being the best influence for the young artist, the university may prove to be the worst, and may further prove equally unfavorable to the artist-teacher.

The second major block to the development of a mature art and to the artist's thriving within the university community is the fear of creativity itself. The university stresses rather the critical aspects of knowledge — the surveying, the categorizing, the analyzing, and the memorizing. The reconversion of such knowledge into living art, into original work, seems to have diminished. In a few universities — particularly in the East — discouragement of original work has achieved the status of policy. I was told by a department head in one university that in that institution the creative arts are discouraged because "it is felt that they may interfere with the liberal arts." I have never been able to understand actually what he meant, but the result of the policy is brilliantly clear, and that result is that the student misses the vital opportunity to integrate what he knows with what he thinks — that he fails to form the expressive, the creative habit.

In another university I once had occasion to pay a number of visits to its very large ceramics department. I noticed that there was a great leafing about among books whenever a piece of pottery was to be decorated and that not even the shapes of pieces were original. It seemed to me that the students were missing whatever pleasure there may be in the work. In talking to them, I made the odd discovery that they did not consider themselves capable of originating a decora-

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tion; it was not for them. In fact one student explained to me that that was not the course they were taking.

A very trivial incident indeed, but still a disturbing one. Could it be that the students were too impressed by the past of ceramics, by the Greek, the Chinese, the Etruscan, to be able to surmount that and create something of their own? It is not impossible that within the university the pre-eminence of scholarship itself may become an impassable block to creativity and may over-impress and stifle both the artist-teacher and the student.

The artist who is only a painter may well become intimidated by his degree-bearing brethren. Under the charmed light of their MA's, their PhD's, their accumulated honors and designations, the scholars speak of art in terms of class and category and under headings of which the artist may never have heard. While he himself may have read extensively about art — and I think that most artists do read a great deal about art and know a great deal about it — while he may have looked at scores of paintings, have dwelt upon them and absorbed them, his interest has been a different one; he has absorbed visually, not verbally. The idea of classifying such work would never have occurred to him, because to him the work is unique; it exists in itself alone. It is its distinction from other art, not its commonality with other art, that interests him. If the work has no such distinction, if it does not stand alone, he has no reason for remembering it. And yet, surrounded by abstract and learned discussion, his own vision may waver and its reality grow dim.

At the same time I feel that both art history and art theory are of immense value to the creative artist. All such material lends depth and subtlety to art, and it is definitely stimulating to most artists. Only when, in the verbalizing or the teaching process, the original creative necessity is obliterated does art theory or art history tend to suffocate the artist.

I have a young friend who, through most of his high-school years, was given to writing poetry. He is now entering his junior year in the university. The other evening I asked him what sort of verse he had been writing and whether I might read some of it. He replied, "Oh, I've stopped writing poetry." Then he explained, "There's so much that you have to know before you can write poetry. There are so many forms that you have to master first. Actually," he said, "I just wrote because I liked to put things down. It didn't amount to much; it was only free verse."

Perhaps my young friend would never under any circumstances have become a good poet. Perhaps he should have had the drive and persistence to master those forms which have defeated him — I myself think he should. But I wonder whether it was made clear to him that all poetic forms have derived from practice; that in the very act of writing poetry he was, however crudely, beginning to create form. I wonder whether it was pointed out to him that form is an instrument, not a tyrant; that whatever measures, rhythms, rhymes, or groupings of sounds best suited his

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own expressive purpose could be turned to from — possibly just his own personal form, but form; and that it too might in time take its place in the awesome hierarchy of poetic devices.

Scholarship is perhaps man's most rewarding occupation, but that scholarship which dries up its own creative sources is a *reductio ad absurdum*, a contradiction of itself.

And there is the loneliness and isolation of the artist upon the college grounds. Of course we know that many artists have painted alone with great success. But

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of these we may say that they chose loneliness: loneliness was their theme and their way of painting. Theirs has been a different loneliness from that of the artist who, safely cushioned within the pleasantest and most agreeable environment known to man, must at some point arise from the good conversational table, move off, don his paint-spattered pants, squeeze out his tubes, and become involved in the nervous, unsure, tense, and unsatisfactorily business of making a picture which will have cohesion, impact, maturity, and an unconscionable lot of sheer work; which will, most uncomfortably, display an indiscreet and unveiled feeling about something; and which will then proceed to violate every canon of good art behavior just delineated by his recent companions.

These latter have no need to create something new. It is enough that they discover the old and bring it home to the common consciousness in all its radiance.

The third major block to the successful functioning of the artist within the university is a somewhat romantic misconception as to what sort of man he is. The more venerable academic element, still under the sway of Trilby, looks upon an artist as a mad genius. This group believes, and I think the public joins it, that an artist has no idea of why he paints; he simply has to. Among the younger and more advanced collegians, the New Criticism has taken over, but the artist himself fares no better. For according to this very avant-garde view, it makes little difference what an artist paints or what he himself happens to think; it is the viewer who really accounts for the meaning of the work, and even he would flounder about hopelessly were it not for the theorist or critic. In his hands rest all the clues to art; he is the high priest of the art process.

I have one critical fencing companion who assures me that the meaning of one order of art — the nonobjective — is a supra-human, that is, a cosmic one. The artist, as he describes him, is a medium through which all sorts of ineffable forces flow. Any willing, however, on the part of the artist, any intending, would be an interference, would only destroy the time-space continuum, would render impure the art produced.

And, by implication, that art which is the product of willing and intending must be impure.

As criticism itself flourishes particularly within the universities, so does this particular critical view find its warmest advocates there. In several universities, the critical circle has formed itself into a small cultural nucleus which exerts a powerful influence, one not free of snobbery, upon the arts — a Gorgon-like power that turns the creative artist into stone.

This curious academic mutation is corroborated within the Visual Arts Report in a most understanding passage.

It is a curious paradox that, highly as the university esteems the work of art, it tends to take a dim view of the artist as an intellectual . . .

one encounters the curious view that the artist does not know what he is doing. It is widely believed and sometimes explicitly stated that the artist, however great his art, does not genuinely understand it, neither how he produced it, nor its place in the culture and in history.

At this point I cannot resist a few somewhat crisper lines in this direction from Francis Bacon: "Some there have been," says the philosopher, "who have made a passage for themselves and their own opinions by pulling down and demolishing former ones; and yet all their stir has but little advanced the matter, since their aim has been not to extend philosophy and the arts in substance and value, but only to . . . transfer the kingdom of opinion to themselves."

Before the artist can be successfully oriented within the university environment there will be needed a calmer view toward both the qualities of the man and the qualities of the work. No artist will be at ease with an opinion that holds him to be a mere handy-man of art — the fellow who puts the paint on. Nor will any artist rest well with the notion that he is a mad genius — something other than human, either more than human or less than human or tangential to human. The whole notion of genius needs to be reassessed, needs perhaps to be deglamorized somewhat. For genius is certainly much more a matter of degree than of kind. The genius so-called is only that one who discerns the pattern of things within the confusion of details a little sooner than the average man. Thus the genius (again, I insist upon saying so-called) is likely to be impatient with those individuals who fail to discern such patterns, such larger meanings, within common affairs.

If the artist, or poet, or musician, or dramatist, or philosopher seems somewhat unorthodox in his manner and attitudes, it is because he knows — only a little earlier than the average man — that orthodoxy has destroyed a great deal of human good, whether of charity, or of good sense, or of art.

It seems to me that, far from setting the "genius" apart, the university should constitute itself the natural place toward which the young person of such exceptional talent may turn for an education suitable to his talent. Otherwise we announce, in effect, that the broadness of view, the intellectual disciplines, the knowledge content which the university affords are reserved for the unproductive man — the uncreative, the nonbrilliant. Such an assumption would be an absurdity, and yet how often do I hear voiced the sentiment that the university is not for the young person of genius.

Withal the foregoing, I do not attribute to the university an intentional undervaluing of art, nor do I believe that creativeness in other fields is discouraged by intention other than in a few conspicuous instances. In the abstract, I believe that creative art is eminent in the university hierarchy of values. But teaching itself is so largely a verbal, a classifying, process that the merely intuitive kinds of knowing, the sensing of things which escape classification, the self-identification

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with great moods and movements in life and art and letters may be lost or obliterated by academic routine. They are not to be taught but rather absorbed through a way of life in which intensively developed arts play an easy and familiar part. For it is just such an inexact knowing that is implicit in the arts. And actually I believe that it is toward this kind of knowing that the classifications of the classroom reach, if sometimes unsuccessfully.

It is this kind of knowing also — the perceptive and the intuitive — that is the very essence of an advanced culture. The dactyl and the spondee, the heroic couplet, the strophe and the antistrophe may be valuable and useful forms to the poet; but the meaning of the poem and its intention greatly transcend any such mechanics.

I hope, in the following discussions, to give you my view of art, of its forms and its meanings, from that particular, isolated, uncertificated promontory which I as an artist occupy, which perhaps any artist occupies. But I have thought it desirable first to locate art, artists, and the creative process itself vis-a-vis the university and its prevailing point of view. That I am here at all is evidence of the changing attitude toward art within the universities.

The Limits of Scientific Knowledge

EDWIN F. TAYLOR

No one can doubt that science has come to have tremendous influence on the modern world. In fact many of the overtones of the word "modern" — the way we travel, the clothes we wear, the methods we use to combat disease — are the direct fruits of the scientific enterprise. Beyond this, science itself has become a symbol of competence and authority. Almost every undertaking whose success depends upon popular support must invoke the symbol of science on its own behalf, whether its purpose be to feed the earth's hungry or to market liver pills.

Perhaps more profound than either of these effects has been the extent to which science has influenced our ways of looking at the world and at ourselves — the influence science has had on our philosophies and our religions. A few examples will make this clear.

Newton's mechanics tells us that for a certain class of physical systems, a complete knowledge of the system at any time will allow us to predict every detail of the system for all future time. The philosophy of determinism extends the bounds of Newton's mechanics to make the statement that if enough information about the world could be gathered it would be possible to predict all future occurrences; that all our thoughts, all our actions are predictable and thus in some sense determined in advance. Strict determinism is not now so popular as it once was because of the discovery that the predictability of mechanical systems has very definite limits.

Again, statistical mechanics tells us that although it may not be feasible to learn everything about a mechanical system, if the system is big enough and contains enough similar parts then there are certain average properties of the system — such as the pressure, volume, or temperature of a gas — which behave in ways that can be predicted if the laws of interaction between the parts of the system are known. When hard pressed, many advocates of the philosophy of determinism will say that although it is not feasible to learn enough about the world to predict every thought and act of every person, nevertheless there are enough averages which describe the economic or political or sociological behavior of man so that this behavior can be considered to be statistically determined.

Finally, scientific operationalism says that no concept will be considered scientifically meaningful unless it can be defined in terms of an actual or possible experiment. The philosophy of logical positivism and other philosophies which

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loosely bear the title "operationalism" hold that *no concept whatever* has any meaning unless it can be defined in terms of an experiment. Thus such words as "God" and "love" and "right and wrong" are to be considered meaningless unless they can be defined in some such "scientific" manner.

Except for the inevitable discussion of the relation between the sexes, the average college bull session rarely gets beyond a preoccupation with the impossibility of making any personal contribution to a world in which one's own responses are conditioned and the laws of history are immutable. The fanatic exclusivism of communism is based on a narrow interpretation of the "inexorable" laws of economics and history. The indifference of the college community in the past years to the religious point of view has been due in part to a suspicion that theological statements are not so much right or wrong as simply meaningless. These are a few of the many results of the three philosophical viewpoints outlined above. And these are only three of many points of view which science has spawned.

Since science has such an impact upon our world and upon the way we look at it, perhaps it is not out of place for a physical scientist to outline what he considers to be the nature and limits of scientific knowledge. The next section contains one scientist's understanding of the consensus among physical scientists as to what constitutes knowledge in the physical sciences. The extension of this argument to the life sciences should be straightforward. A few comments on the behavioral sciences are given in the following section.

Needless to say the growth of the sciences is not complete. As time passes, the picture which scientists have of science will be changed, and so the material which follows will need revision. The strength of science is its clarity and utility, not its timelessness.

The Physical Sciences

Before a physical scientist begins work on a professional problem, he agrees to consider only certain aspects of this problem. In a sense he puts on blinders. The only aspects of the problem which he will treat as a scientist are those aspects which are the results of actual or possible experiments. Thus a physicist defines length in terms of an experiment — called an "operation" — by which length is measured; he defines time by describing the mechanism of a possible clock by which time is to be measured; and so forth. Such basic operational definitions of length, time, mass, and electrical charge will be combined in various ways to define velocity, energy, voltage, etc. which can be observed in other experiments.

These aspects of reality which physical scientists study are called "observables." In order to describe the relationships existing between observables, the physical scientist may develop a descriptive theory. The symbols of this theory need not be limited to symbols for observables alone, but the only contact the theory can be

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said to have with scientific knowledge is in terms of the predictions the theory makes concerning the results of further possible experiments.

In no field of the physical sciences is this limitation of attention to observables more explicit than in the theory of quantum mechanics which deals with the motion and interaction of the smallest particles and the smallest packets of energy that we know about. In quantum mechanics there are two general kinds of mathematical symbols used. One of these kinds of symbols is called the "wave function" or the "state function" and represents the physical condition of the system under study. This state function has no scientific meaning by itself. The second kind of mathematical symbol is called an "operator." Each operator used in quantum mechanics represents an observable. The physical process of carrying out an experiment on a system corresponds to the mathematical process of applying the corresponding operator to the state function of the system. Only by means of such an experiment can any knowledge of the system be obtained. Thus the limitation of scientific knowledge to the results of experiments is built into the basic mathematical formalism by which the laws of science are expressed.

Note that there is nothing in the "nature of reality" that forces scientists to limit themselves to operational phenomena. The limitation is done by the nature of science, not by the nature of the universe.

Why do scientists limit themselves in this way to the results of actual or conceivable experiments? There are very good reasons for this. One is that physical science at least is relieved of the burdens of national and international politics, religious and racial attachments. The scientific community is one of the very few genuine international brotherhoods. It is significant that scientists can meet at international conferences, understand one another, help each other's work, and part as friends. In international diplomatic conferences on the other hand the participants often do not understand each other, fail to help one another or the world, and part as antagonists. The questions with which scientific conferences deal may be much more limited in scope than the questions dealt with in diplomatic conferences, but at least the contacts within these limits are more fruitful to the disciplines involved.

Secondly, by limiting itself to observables, science becomes a cumulative discipline. In theory every experiment that is carried out, whether it be in a freshman laboratory or in a research institute, adds to the total of our knowledge of the interrelation between observables and thus adds to science. Of course there are poorly designed experiments and incompetent experimenters, but this is a problem of tactics, not of strategy.

Finally, the limitation to observables leads to an agreed-upon method for resolving disputes. Many times two different theories are developed to describe a body of scientific observations. In order to decide between these theories it is often possible to find a "crucial experiment" for which the competing theories predict mutually exclusive results. If the crucial experiment is carried out it may disprove

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one of the two theories, although of course it cannot be said to "prove" the alternate one in any final sense.

To summarize: it is the nature of physical science to limit itself to a study of "observables." This limitation is imposed by the nature of science, not by the nature of reality. In exchange for this limitation of subject matter science receives a truly catholic character, becomes a cumulative discipline, and is able to develop powerful methods for resolving its own inconsistencies. Physical science is in short like a very sensitive, versatile, and powerful tool. This tool may be used for accomplishing two different kinds of tasks: (1) describing the physical world and predicting its behavior in terms of the fewest number of irreducible descriptive laws and (2) guiding man in undertaking any physically realizable task (flying to the moon, making an atom bomb).

If science is like a tool, then like a tool it has no built-in conscience. Just as a hammer may be used either for building houses or for breaking windows, in the same way science may be used for destructive or constructive purposes. This point does not need to be labored in a world threatened by nuclear holocaust.

Some of the questions which we consider to be the most important cannot be asked, much less answered, in a scientific context. One such question is, "How should the results of science be used?" As an operational question this is meaningless. No conceivable physical experiment can give us an answer to it. Yet at the very least the survival of civilization depends upon its answer. Similarly science can tell us nothing comprehensive about the "nature of reality." He who speaks about "reality" is forced to speak in pictures or metaphors because the nature of reality is not itself an observable. Yet to reject all such pictures and to say that the only meaningful statements concern observables is to make a statement which is not itself verifiable operationally.

The Behavioral Sciences

What has gone before has dealt with the physical sciences. What of psychology, anthropology, sociology, economics, and political science? Do they limit themselves to observables as do the physical sciences? Since at this point the discussion leaves the area of the author's professional training, he will make only a few tentative comments.

One complication within the behavioral sciences is that the *values* held by an individual or a group can be studied as observables without considering the *validity* of these values. The number of Mohammedans in Egypt and their effect on the economy and the government can be studied as observables without passing judgment on the validity of Mohammedanism itself. The failure to make clear this distinction between values treated as observables and values treated critically sometimes amounts to misrepresentation.

Aside from this complication, are not the behavioral sciences just as void of

ultimate answers as the physical sciences? Are they not also tools by means of which we can understand and guide individual and collective behavior once the goals for this behavior have been set?

Conclusion

For four hundred years the scientific enterprise has grown in power and influence. Its accomplishments have been enormous. No sharper tool has ever been devised for the sustained attack upon human ignorance and superstition. Yet these accomplishments have been due in part to the concentration of scientific attention upon certain aspects of reality to the exclusion of other aspects. It is time we realized that science is not equipped to answer many of our questions which require answers, that as soon as our philosophies and religions have purged themselves of the grosser superstitions they must be judged on other than scientific grounds. Man need no longer feel the compulsion to treat his ultimate questions "scientifically." On the other hand he can no longer hope to lay his burdens of morality and creativity on the back of science. He must shoulder them himself. But insofar as man is able to set his goal and to find singleness of purpose for his will, science will show him the road to travel and will lend wings to his feet along the way.

The Nature of the Helping Process

ALAN KEITH-LUCAS

To help another human being may sound like a very simple process. Actually it is one of the hardest things that anyone can be called on to do.

We all know our failures in the field. We know the person who refuses to be helped — the client who won't get medical care, the fellow who won't take the job we offer him even though it would seem that to do so was the most obvious common sense. We know also the man who accepts our help but uses it in a way that troubles us or seems self-defeating — the public assistance recipient who uses his grant to become more dependent instead of less so, the man who seems to accept our advice but somehow manages to pervert it so that it does him more harm than good. And we know perhaps only too well the person who uses our help as long as we are there to watch over him or "jack him up" but backslides as soon as our back is turned.

Our natural reaction is to blame the people who do this to us, or to attribute their failure to get and to use help to some inadequacy in them. We label them as immature or sinful or uncooperative or stubborn or just plain "no 'count." Notice how even in listing here what went wrong with the helping process I have said, "The person or the man who . . ." as if there was something wrong with him.

What do we do then, once we recognize this wrongness? We can do any number of things, and from the Early Church Fathers to the heyday of the Poor Law and even into the era of modern scientific methods of helping we, and society as a whole, have done one or all of them.

We have sometimes refused to help those who refused to help themselves, or who have used our help unwisely. We have washed our hands of them. Or we have tried to force them to do something about themselves by punishing them in some way, through starvation, or shame, or the workhouse, by the whip or the stocks, or by what is known as less-eligibility — forcing them to live at a level below what health and decency demands. Or again if we are very patient and full of a desire to help, we have tried one of three methods according to our knowledge and taste. Sometimes we have gone on trying to help in the same way, believing that in the end the water will wear away the stone. We have exhorted and urged and persuaded and bombarded with good advice. Sometimes we have hoped that if

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only they could learn to like and admire us, some change might be forthcoming, and we have been extra nice and non-judgmental and friendly. And sometimes we have tried to figure out what was wrong and put it right for such people. We have manipulated their environment or fixed their teeth or persuaded their relatives to treat them more kindly or judiciously parcelled out praise or encouragement or tried to get them to see how their feelings have led them astray.

I am not saying that people have not been helped in perhaps all of these ways. But I do suggest that all of those answers fail to take into account one very important fact about the helping process which is perhaps the key to helping on a deeper level. And this is simply the fact that helping is a two-way process, involving two people, and that what goes wrong in the helping may lie to no small extent with the person who offers help or with the process through which help is being extended.

I don't pretend that we know all about this process, or that what we know involves any startling new discoveries. Indeed many of its principles have been known to man since at least the dawn of the Christian era. But I do think that the growth of organized helping has enabled us to look more carefully than perhaps ever before at what goes on between helper and helped.

The Choice to Receive

To give help really means *to offer someone an opportunity to change*. All other help is simply a patching up until the next breakdown, necessary perhaps for the moment but of no lasting significance. This was recognized by such pioneers as the Christian Socialists and the Charity Organization leaders of the last century when they fought to replace casual charity with planned concern for those in need. But those sincere people made one very great mistake. They thought that what went wrong with the helping that they saw all around them lay in what was given and not in how it was given. They thought that money or material things did not offer a framework in which change could take place and that intangible things such as advice, persuasion, and friendly interest did. This is a mistake still made by many modern helpers, who exalt "services" such as counselling and ignore the help that can come from something as prosaic as a public assistance grant or transportation somewhere or a job or a little time to rest.

What these people do not see is that all help is potentially good if the recipient can choose to make use of it and that no help is good if the recipient doesn't. So that helping comes to mean *something, tangible or intangible, offered in such a way that the person to whom it is offered can choose to use it — that is, choose to change through its use*.

But we do have to be very careful about this word "choose," for we use it in a rather special sense. To choose to use help means much more than to select a course of action or even to make up one's mind to do something. It means the

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decision of the whole person to go along with something, to do something about something, to risk oneself and everything one has in order to get something better. The nearest word to it in our language is the meaning that the Church gives to the word "commitment." Man does not "select" God or the Devil. One either commits oneself to God or one doesn't.

It is necessary to understand this special use of the word because the central idea here has only too often been misinterpreted both by the practitioners and the critics of "permissive" or "non-directive" techniques. This kind of choosing does not mean that the person being helped is free to do anything he wants without suffering the natural or legal consequences, a misunderstanding that has given social workers and ministers and progressive teachers the reputation of being soft-hearted or starry-eyed or unrealistic. It has, as a matter of fact, nothing to do with material freedom or freedom of choice in the usual sense. It can be exercised just as well by a prisoner in a jail as by a public assistance recipient on an inadequate grant or a company executive at his desk. Material restrictions may complicate but can never take away the necessity of this kind of choice.

Still less can this kind of choice be thought of as easy or made possible by reasoning or arguing or exhorting or persuading, as many ministers know in relation to the kind of commitment with which they are most concerned. One cannot make it because one ought to or sees good reason for doing so or because someone else wants one to. For this kind of choice is terribly hard. It is terribly personal. And it is terribly dangerous. Truly, as in a wider context, one must lose one's life to gain it and to ask someone to change is to ask one knows not what.

For making this kind of choice always means at least four things. It means admitting your own failure. It means putting oneself more or less in the power of another, letting him know you and take a part in your life. It means hard work, for the choice has to be made again and again in different contexts, although the fact of having once made it makes it more possible the second and the hundredth time. It means risking the unknown; giving up a present certainty, even though this may be an uncomfortable one, for a good which cannot as yet be fully seen.

And here it might be said that the correspondences between the process of asking for human help and the religious experience of conversion are so remarkable that they cannot, I feel, be entirely accidental. The words, repentance, submission, steadfastness under temptation, and faith, are plainly corollary to the four elements that have been described here — a fact that is perhaps hard to realize until one has experienced both.

I do not suggest that this is exactly the same process. In fact there is one very important difference. The person approaching God for help must try to submit entirely to his Will. What individuality he maintains is then God's gift. He must also intend his submission to God's will to be permanent. The person seeking human help cannot submit to the will of the helper. If he does so he

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defeats his ends. In fact he must always maintain his integrity as a separate person, against the will of the helper. This is, I would suggest, because the helper's will is of the same imperfect nature as his own and because human will tends always to control and not to set free. And again the helped person makes this submission not forever, or even wholly for a time, but for a specific purpose and for a limited length of time. Nevertheless he must admit the helper to some extent into his life.

I would tentatively suggest that what we have here is a natural mirror or representation of a divine process and that it should not surprise us. It seems to me entirely proper that there should be such "repetitions of the pattern" at different levels in a consistent universe, and I am given some courage to suggest this by works such as Dorothy Sayer's *The Mind of the Maker*, in which she examines the process of artistic creation as a representation of the Trinity.

Fighting the Need for Help

If this is what being helped means, is it then surprising that people will do almost anything to prevent themselves from experiencing it? Is it surprising that many of them refuse to admit their real need? Is it surprising that others demand help of us on their own terms — "give me my check and leave me alone" — as a means of warding off any demand really to change? The demanding client is not simply covering up his embarrassment at asking for help, as he has so often been represented. He is actively fighting his need for help. So is the person who submits to the will of the helping person all the external, unimportant decisions, who indeed thrusts them upon him and becomes what we call dependent, while he "goes through the motions" and remains at the same time unchanged. Just as one of the safest ways of not encountering God is to go to church every Sunday, sing all the hymns, and obey all the rules, so to appease a human helper is a way of avoiding help. Often enough the person who says that he wants help, who does what seems all he can to get it and yet finds it beyond his grasp, is in reality refusing it.

Let me try to illustrate this with a case. Here for instance is a longshoreman with a hernia that can be repaired so that he can do light work. A vocational rehabilitation counsellor helps him get it repaired and finds him a job as a clerk. The client is co-operative. He keeps appointments. He tries to learn what he needs for his new job. He takes a position offered to him. But in a month or two he develops a psychosomatic asthma and has to go to bed again.

He wasn't a malingerer. The asthma was very real. He didn't sit down and figure out: if I get asthma I won't have to work. But in the recesses of his mind he was full of fears. He was afraid of his new job — could he succeed at it? He feared having once more to compete in a world of well men that would make no excuse for him, for he was no longer ill. And maybe he feared too what this

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new job meant to him. He was no longer the masculine figure tossing bales. He was pushing a pen — an old man's job, a weakling's job, a job that could be done by a girl. And so his mind and his body together threw up a protection for him. If he were sick he was safe from his fears. And this, we are beginning to understand, is the real meaning of much of the sickness, both mental and physical, that we see in this world. More and more diseases are shown to be protections against pressures one cannot stand.

We could say many things about this man and his situation. First, that the pressures were great. Second, that "he" — the whole of him, that is — could not make the great decision to get well. His conscious mind could but not body-and-mind together. He was in fact caught between two contradictory forces, his desire to get well and his fear of doing so.

This is a state which, in my profession's peculiar jargon, we call ambivalence — wanting two contradictory things, feeling two ways at once. It is a paralyzing condition, so paralyzing in fact that it often looks like laziness, lack of moral stamina, being content with poor conditions, even feeble-mindedness. It is what "is wrong" with so many people that we think are inadequate. And helping very often becomes then *making it possible for people to resolve their ambivalence*; helping them choose (in our sense of the word) to get well, to change or not to change, to use help or not to use it. And we might say about our longshoreman one more thing: perhaps the helper did not help this man with his ambivalence. Perhaps he ignored it or did not want to believe that it was there.

For there are certain conditions which we know make the resolution of ambivalence more possible and free people to make the kind of choice of which they are capable. And the first, and perhaps the basic one on which all the others depend, is in itself a paradox. It is that *a positive choice is only possible where the opposite choice is also possible and acceptable*.

Intellectually this may not be too hard to see. Man cannot choose to be good unless he can also choose to be bad. If God had compelled man to be good, he would not be good at all. Again man cannot choose to live fully unless he can also choose (or accept) death. Nothing is gained without risk, and to say "Yes" sincerely always means that I could have said "No."

But this truth is terribly hard to recognize in practice. We so much want the man we are helping to make the *right decision*, to choose independence and not dependence, God and not the Devil. Even to recognize the possibility that he may choose the wrong seems like treason to us. We work for an agency whose whole purpose is to rehabilitate. How can we freely tell a man that he is free to remain ill? We work for a church which is dedicated to the eradication of sin. How can we tell a man that he is free to sin?

And yet he cannot choose to get well unless he can choose to be ill. He cannot choose to be good unless he can also choose to sin. He cannot be pushed or forced or even gently manipulated (one of the strongest forces I know of) into

choosing to get well or choosing to be good — not if we want a real decision. This is the mistake that so many of us make time and time again — churches, courts, protective agencies, and schools.

Facing Negatives

Perhaps I can make the point clearer by exploring a little further what is meant here by the opposite or negative choice. By this I do not mean merely a failure to choose the good (or the supposed good). That is what happens when we try to *make* someone into something that he has not chosen to be, and he fails to live up to expectations. It is utterly defeating. But there is always a negative choice — even a kind of failure — that in itself is a choice and that has something of triumph about it. It is the choice, the determination, not to do what is expected of one, not to have anything to do with this kind of help. It is the decision to "go it alone" or "to take the consequences." And being free to make this choice does not and cannot ever mean being spared these consequences. It is this that man, if he is to be helped, must always be free to do — even to "curse God and die." And we and even our cherished values are not of course God. What we think of as the wrong choice may for another person be right. Even if it cannot be, the choice must still be there. The risk must be taken. And the person who makes the wrong choice is much closer to help than he who makes no choice at all.

That is why I insisted that help must be help to choose to be well or to choose *not* to be well. All we can do as helping people is to set up those conditions that free a man to make this choice. And thus we come to the second condition, which is a corollary of the first. *The choice must be made by the person helped. It cannot be made, it cannot even be too passionately wished, by the helper.* For the helper to put his own will into it takes it away from the will of the helped; for the helper to push or persuade or cajole increases rather than resolves the helped person's ambivalence. For an ambivalent person is like a block checked by a strong spring; the more the block is pressed against the spring the stronger the spring becomes, and more and more force will have to be applied to keep it in the desired place. For it to be easily movable the spring must be uncoiled first.

And this is why it is usually true, as a third proposition, that *people need a great deal more help with their negative feelings than with their positive.* They need to look at their negative feelings, to examine them, to discover their weaknesses. Their positive feelings usually get a lot of support. They are acceptable and everyone can weigh in with reassurance, hope, or praise. It is their negative feelings with which they must struggle — their fears, their doubts, their hates, their despair. And this cannot be done, some psychologists and some preachers to the contrary, by pretending that the negative feelings are not there. They are. The

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man who exhorted us to "accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative" may have discovered a rule of social intercourse, but he never had to help people in real trouble — which is why the extroverted, Pollyanna kind of helper who always wants to keep things pleasant is sometimes more harmful than helpful.

It follows therefore fourthly that *the helping relationship must be one in which negative feelings can be expressed without fear of blame, anger, sorrow, or loss of face.* This means in turn that it cannot be a relationship of superior and inferior, saint and sinner, wise and foolish, judge and judged, or even their modern equivalent, adjusted and unadjusted. These things may objectively be true, or society may have given one of the pair responsibility to act as if they were true, as in the case of a judge. But as helped and helper struggle together to understand, to come to a point where the helped person makes his decision, they must struggle as equals either of whom could have felt and thought like the other. This is what we mean when we use the rather glib phrases such as "respect for human dignity" and "accepting people as they are"; that both helper and helped are, for all their difference, fallible and imperfect creatures who, if not capable of the particular weaknesses of each other, are capable of many others as disturbing. One of the greatest helpers of delinquent children I ever knew, when I asked once how he was so able to have children share with him so fully their real hopes and fears, said, "Because I have the mind of a criminal myself."

Five other conditions that make possible the commitment to change more or less follow from these four.

The relationship must be centered entirely on the interests of the person served. It cannot be centered in the helper's need to be liked or to control or even to satisfy his own conscience. It cannot *immediately* be centered on any other good, such as the good of society, the honor of the church or of the welfare department, public morality, justice or fair play, although once real help is given these generally will be added to it. This is a mistake frequently given: to try to kill two birds with one stone and thereby miss them both. The helped person's need to make his decision is antecedent. It must come first.

Helping is often helped by limits in which both helper and helped can move. To be helped is so frightening that a person can often risk it better if he knows how far it can go, if he is not asked to change altogether, if the power of the helping person is prescribed in some way — by law, by rule, by agreement. Thus it is helpful for the public assistance recipient to have eligibility requirements: to know that whatever he may do or what he may confess, if he is eligible, you (hopefully at least) cannot deny him his monthly check. There is help in hospital regulations for instance that require a certain length of stay after an operation and do not force a man to make decisions that he can know nothing about. There is help in agency function, in the helper who can say, "This part of your problem is my business but this part is not." And there is often help in time, in agreements to try this for so long, or in the approach of a court-hearing or the end of a school year.

You know this yourselves. The only thing that made your education possible — and helpful to you — is the fact that you knew that it would come to an end. If your teachers had said to you, "Come and stay here until you have learned everything there is to learn," you would never have dared enter college or seminary.

It must deal with real things, however unpleasant. A doctor who refused to consider cancer of the anus because either he was afraid of cancer or he preferred to ignore the bathroom would be no doctor at all. So help with social problems must deal with what is really there — with real sorrow, real hate, real sin, and real despair. It cannot deal with false reassurance, with polite evasions, with "pie in the sky." And it must deal with them here and now. It cannot, as in a case I read lately, assure a woman that she ought to be able to get support from an absent husband and do nothing about the fact that her gas and heat was to be turned off that afternoon.

It must be based on trust, on the belief that man can be helped, however wayward he may seem. I say this in contradiction to what seems to me the trend in the social sciences today which progressively appears to see man as sicker and sicker and needing more and more control from his stronger fellows.¹ But this kind of trust is necessary if one is to stand by the whole process of helping. Often this is very difficult. Man's first choices in the process of finding himself again are often apparently negative and are in any case quite unpredictable. Sometimes a confused parent will begin to find himself by expressing all his negative feelings about his child. One that I remember started her recovery and her eventual change from a rigid, denying person into a loving one by beating her granddaughter. If the caseworker had lost faith in the possibility of her changing for the good at that point, she might never have come through. The caseworker couldn't and didn't approve of the beating, but she could hold to her faith that the grandmother could find in the end a satisfactory relationship and might in fact do so, not in spite of but because of her mistakes.

And finally and proceeding from this, *it must be based on humility* (in the Christian sense of the word). And this is because in the end you don't know what is right for another (you are lucky indeed if you know it for yourself); you don't have to face what he is facing (and pray God you never may have to); you don't, and you never will, and pray God that you will never acquire that pride that dares to assert it does, or even someday may, know the length and the breadth and the depth of a man. Thus I end this list, as I began it, with a paradox. The more you know, the less you know or claim to know.

¹This is, I might suggest, following the lead of many thinkers, the natural result of the humanism on which modern social science is based. It seems inevitable that movements, that begin with an affirmation of the natural goodness of man, end with discovering him so weak that he needs control for his own good (cf. as extreme examples the French and Russian revolutions), while movements which start from man's sinfulness discover the divine in him.

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Help for the Helper

These conditions for helpings are what make me say that to help is a tough proposition, that it needs self-discipline (which schools of social work really exist to help you attain), and that prompts me to ask of any would-be-helping person three very impertinent questions which are nevertheless very pertinent:

Do you really want to help? Do you want to put yourself truly at the service of another, which is not everybody's desire? Or do you in your heart of hearts want to be thanked or to control or to ease your own conscience or to serve some other end? If you do, I do not blame you. There is much else you can do, but helping is not your forte.

Are you tough enough to help? Any idea that helping is a "sissy" business is very far from the truth. It can be and is something that calls for every reserve of courage anyone can muster. It takes toughness to face reality, to risk anger, even to court it, to strip the polite veils from sorrow, to allow your clients, patients, or parishioners to make mistakes, to endure their doubts and despair. It takes courage not to disarm them by glossing things over, by being self-righteous, by keeping things on a pleasant and utterly meaningless level.

Are you humble enough to help? Or in the last analysis must people be helped your way or by you and you alone?

All this, I know, sounds very difficult. It is. But I think that there is help; help for the helper even on a human level. And so I will share with you a formulation that I have found helpful, not so much in learning to help as to check on what I am doing whenever I get involved in trying to help. It sounds delightfully simple. It identifies the three things that a helping person needs to convey to a person in trouble. These are

This is it. This is the real situation, stripped of all its polite coverings — what you really are up against.

I know that it hurts. As far as it is given to me I feel for you and with you in facing this trouble, and any time that you want to bring out your anger, your fear, or your doubts it will be acceptable to me — not because I feel them myself but because I know that I could feel them.

I will stand by you to help you if you want me. I will not force you in any way but at the same time nothing will shake my willingness to help you should you ask it of me.

Like all simple statements this can be used in a number of ways. As a mechanical formula it is utterly meaningless. As a framework against which to check what you have put into helping, or as a simple expression of something that, however long we consider it, discloses new levels of meaning, I think it can be of help. But first you must make the process your own. It cannot be learned intellectually. It must be experienced in feeling and relationship.

Invitation to Theological Learning

WILLIAM R. MUELLER

This essay is essentially a call to members of academic communities, to university and college faculty members; its purpose is to persuade them of the value of at least a minimum of theological study to them both in their roles as instructors of other disciplines and as human beings. It is a suggestion that the presence of lay theologians on our campuses would lend vitality to the whole academic enterprise.

The wisdom or virtue of such a proposal is not universally self-evident. I recall vividly a meeting several years ago of about a dozen of my faculty colleagues, gathered to lay plans for a semimonthly discussion group. Representing various areas of academic disciplines, we sought some unifying topic for our envisaged conversations, some common denominator which would enable us to communicate among ourselves, overcoming the usual deterrents to dialogue among specialists from different fields. One of my more naive and hopeful associates finally suggested that we study three or four contemporary theologians, calling occasionally on a professor from a neighboring divinity school to come in to speak to us. With this remark a dear friend of mine, who professed economics, became visibly discomforted and pronounced with some zeal that he would not put on his shoes and cross the street to hear any one discourse on theology.

This was not the first time that the cry of "Off with her head" had been raised against that ancient and doughty queen of the sciences, theology. Robert Burton could still refer to her as queen in his early seventeenth century encyclopedic *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, but the forces of Lutheranism, Erasmianism, and Baconianism had already begun the process of dethronement. Protestantism, humanism, and inductive science, each in its own way, set up some kind of barrier to the relationship which Queen Theology had enjoyed with the many subjects embodying the culture of this world. And in the nineteenth century Newman's argument for a theologically centered university, impressive and majestic as it is, seemed nevertheless quaint when juxtaposed to Arnold's championship of an education where literature is king, or to Huxley's where the natural sciences reign. To the contemporary secular mind theology seems old hat, and there are doubtless scores who would sit with my shoeless friend on the other side of the street, engaged in the practical business of learning about this world and content that the theologian's voice echo through empty rooms. In short, theology is

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suspect in most academic circles; it has lost even its sound and fury. The reasons for distrust are many.

The Charges Against Theology

I. For one thing, those who have through the centuries represented the voice of theology have not always proceeded with consummate tact or distinguished intelligence. Renaissance theologians who insisted on reading the skies without the help of a telescope, and those of the nineteenth century who refuted geologists and biologists with the first chapters of Genesis, did not prosper their cause. Nor did the assailants of biblical criticism (and here we have the theologians scrambling among themselves) inspire much confidence. Astronomers, geologists, biologists, historians, and others became increasingly restive under what they viewed as tyrannical encroachment on their own disciplines. Or to put it another way, the former subjects of the queen sought autonomous rule and were unwilling to take dictation from a mistress whose deductive claims seemed to them excessive and baneful. The splintering of the world's knowledge proceeded apace, with each area jealous of its prerogatives and withdrawing more and more into itself. The Babel narrative is re-enacted daily in academia. If the queen is dead, a multiplicity of kings, each with his own closed system, has risen from her ashes.

II. A second cause of distrust among secular scholars is their belief that theology, unlike other disciplines, is static and inflexible. Advances through the years in the natural sciences and mathematics have been spectacular; the social sciences have progressed to a keener understanding of the mechanics of society; the humanities, while perhaps offering few notable improvements over the Greeks, have none the less continued through literature and the arts to present with varying degrees of aesthetic skill the actions and passions of men. But theology, affirming many of those who scorn it and consequently disregard it, presents a body of fixed dogmas invulnerable to change. That this is a false view would become immediately evident to any one casting the most cursory glance over the theological literature from the early Church Fathers to Barth and Brunner: God has not changed, nor has his Word, but human understanding of his self-revelation has waxed and waned through the years. Theologians may on occasion seem tyrannous, but, far from being static, they progress and regress along with scholars in other disciplines.

III. Theology is rendered suspect also because of its necessarily metaphysical character. Many scholars today have little patience with metaphysics: a bird in the hand is worth a score in the firmament. Many professors know their Comte well and are ready to settle (whether in humility or in arrogance it is difficult to say) for some form of positivism. The natural sciences for the most part stick to

their own knitting and see little need if any for looking beyond their own laboratories, a position that may have something to commend it so long as it is not carried so far as to deny that anything exists outside the workshop. The behavioral and social sciences observe and measure and classify with admirable precision and help us to know a great deal about ourselves. But it is an unhappy sign of the times if we infer that what is is a guide to what should be. To try to keep in step with the Kinsey report would for some of us be an arduous, a debilitating, and a rather time-consuming endeavor.

But theology, far more a deductive and metaphysical science than an inductive and a physical one, seeks to attribute an ultimate meaning to the universe. And those who feel uneasy in the realm of metaphysics find similar discomfort in the suggestion that there are absolute values and ultimate solutions. Such values and solutions are nowhere evident in the here and the now; quite the contrary, a study of the world of space and time reveals a multiplicity of customs and judgments. Coming of age in Samoa does not bear a one-to-one correspondence to the coming out of the American debutante, even though striking similarities are to be found by the unprejudiced eye. Cultures which think nothing of the bared bosom but are shocked by the bare leg are countered by those which react inversely. Building on a host of such observations, many will argue that there are no absolutes; everything is as relative as the ethical and moral postulates of the ages of man. Some *suspect* that there is no ultimate meaning to human life and to the created universe; others are *convinced* that there is none. And little quarter is given to the philosopher or theologian who searches the mind of God to find what his will may be for this world which admittedly is multiple and various in its ways and its judgments. A third suspicion then is that metaphysics is the bunk; that the quest for the ultimate is fatuous; and that God, far from being merely dead, never lived or — at the least — has never revealed himself to us if he does live.

IV. A fourth thrust against theology comes from those who view it as intellectually and academically unrespectable; it smells of sawdust which should be left to the circuses. It is a compound of orgiastic emotionalism, frightened superstition, irresponsible credulity, and cloying sentimentality. Billy Sunday and Aimee Semple McPherson made their marks, as do the latter-day enthusiasts who walk in their steps and shout their messages. Norman Vincent Peale is soothing millions with his how-to-harness-God's-power-with-a-minimum-of-effort-and-sacrifice gospel. But disciplines other than theology have had their simplifiers and popularizers, and they have been given no more serious consideration than shallow preachers deserve. Reinhold Niebuhr is in New York as well as Dr. Peale. It would be well to judge the achievements of any group on the basis of the best it has to offer. And here the theologians and the teachers of theology need bow to no one in respect to either learning or wisdom. It is with responsible incredulity that I listen to those who suggest that one goes slumming intellectually or

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aesthetically when he crosses the threshold of a theological school. We would have to look far for contemporary thinkers who are more brilliant or profound than a Niebuhr or a Tillich, and there are scores of other theologians and biblical scholars who need not apologize to the many able professors of the liberal arts and sciences.

V. There is a fifth charge against theology, particularly if one takes theology seriously: it may lead to commitment; a man may begin with a perfectly objective interest in the subject and wind up finding himself not a professor of theology but a professor of faith. The ways of the Holy Spirit *are* somewhat devious at times. Now every freshman knows that there is something known as proper scholarly detachment — I once knew an instructor who was afraid to assert in the classroom that he was an advocate of motherhood. There is indeed a difference, and a difference to be cherished, between the lectern and the pulpit, just as there is between the lectern and the political stump. But a totally uncommitted human being, if such could exist, would bear a disquieting resemblance to a jelly fish. A university or college campus is no place for men of a blind faith to anything; but intelligent commitment to various scientific, political, philosophical, aesthetic, and religious ideologies makes for the life blood of the academic community — exciting and intelligent warfare is always preferable to drowsy apathy. If commitment of any kind is suspect, adherence to the Christian faith is perhaps particularly intolerable. Such faith is viewed in some quarters as provincial and exclusive. It is risky enough to give our allegiance to some nebulous and eternal First Mover; to believe in the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Trinity through which God expresses himself bespeaks an unwarrantable excess.

These five objections are rather formidable. They do make for an imposing array of half-truths, for most of them are charges based on some fact. Theologians have through the centuries foolishly and ignorantly infringed upon other areas of knowledge where wiser angels would have moved more sensitively and thoughtfully. They have on occasion stood guard over what they viewed as a never-changing discipline. They have affirmed metaphysical ultimates whose foundations have rested on grains of sand. They have at times displayed more passionate zeal than measured deliberation. And they have sometimes been possessed of a blind obeisance which precluded for them any examination of alternatives. Some theologians at least have done these things and have thus placed both the discipline and the faith which they affirm in bad odor. But to condemn all theologians for the egregious errors of some is to throw out the baby with the bath.

Exposure to Theology

To say exactly what theology is, except for the stating of a simple dictionary definition, is no easy task. Reduced to its Greek roots, it means to speak of a god. The word also means a systematic statement about the being and nature of God.

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Christian theology at its best may perhaps be described as disciplined human reflection on the Christian faith, with an attempt to understand that faith in relation to the world and to make statements about that understanding. Its text is the Bible, glossed by the developing body of the Church's thought about its own faith and experience. Theology is not to be equated with living faith: the Christian's faith and hope find their source in the ultimate authority of God and in his revelation of himself through the Scriptural Word and the Word Incarnate. Theology is human discourse which seeks to make clear the being and the nature of the source of one's faith.

Contributions of Theology

There remain two principal questions: In what way will theological literacy contribute to the teaching and scholarly effectiveness of an instructor of one of the arts or sciences? In what way will it contribute to his effectiveness as a human being?

It is obvious that Christian theology is not equally related to or applicable to the various disciplines to which individual Christians are devoted. Christian theology as a body of doctrine is more immediately relevant to the study of literature and philosophy for example than to that of chemistry and mathematics. An individual can best determine for himself to just what extent his proficiency in his own field can be enhanced through exposure to theology. In terms of present accomplishment, perhaps no group of teachers and scholars have shown the fruitfulness of interdisciplinary study to a greater extent than those in the area of literature. Courses in the relationships between literature and theology are offered in increasing numbers in both divinity schools and liberal arts institutions; nor has there been any dearth of books on the subject. And it is no wonder. One might indeed ask how a person can come to an enlightened understanding of such writers as Spenser, Donne, or Milton, or of Kafka, Faulkner, or Camus — to mention only a few — without a grounding in theology. But the instructor of literature is of course not the only person who finds theological knowledge pertinent to his discipline. An iconographic study of the plastic arts would hardly get under way without a knowledge of religious symbolism. A group of sociologists currently working under the auspices of the Faculty Christian Fellowship will, it is hoped, publish the results of their study undertaking "a thorough critical examination of basic sociological theory in light of the Christian faith." Many of the readers of this essay will be familiar with still other examples of profitable interchange.

I have used such words as *interdisciplinary*, *relationships*, and *interchange*, a fact which should suggest that the path between theology and other disciplines bears traffic going in both directions. The theologian has much to teach; but he also has much to learn, if he will keep alert, from his academic brothers. For if

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the theologian is distinguished from others in that he alone undertakes to make systematic, expository statements about God, he is by no means alone in his quest for a vision of ultimate reality or of some underlying unity in the world. The composer, the artist, the choreographer, each in his own way, also seeks to interpret what is to him some form or pattern of the ultimate. And the poet, the dramatist, the novelist will also make assertions, by way of simile, metaphor, and symbol, about the nature of things. The theologian who learns nothing from a Bach, a Gerard Manley Hopkins, a Rouault — or from a Darwin, a Marx, a Camus, for that matter — is a man who needs awakening. The program of Religion and the Arts at the Chicago Theological School and the writings of Paul Tillich, whether or not we agree with their conclusions, show how fruitful a cross-fertilization can be. And indeed, if we can at times study Dante or T. S. Eliot for his theological acumen, we can also read Kierkegaard or Buber for his literary skill. The world's knowledge need not be so disparate as it may at times seem. If this is God's universe, it in all likelihood is possessed of a center, of a unity, which is to be sought even if it does now escape the human eye. And if the serious academician is not a theologian, that is, one who tries to express in some systematic though partial way the nature of the ultimate, he at least is one who by virtue of his very humanity yearns for a vision of the order which must lie under the disordered appearance which greets him on all sides.

This brings us finally to a searching of the last question: In what way will an acquaintance with theology, with the doctrinal affirmations of the Christian faith, contribute to the effectiveness of the Christian teacher as a human being or — if you like — as a witness? Without bending to any shade of the Gnostic heresy, I would urge that the Christian who has been gifted with powers of intellectual discrimination and with an academic training has the obligation to come to grips with his faith and tradition on a level of precision which the layman does not require. It is true that the Lord cautioned his hearers that a man does not reach the Kingdom without a childlike faith and humility, and it would be surprising to find the Kingdom inhabited exclusively by former holders of distinguished chairs and professorships in our leading universities. But it is also true that the Christian in academic circles should be able to speak intelligently of his faith and of his reasons for holding it. He should be able to speak with some clarity of the meanings of the doctrines of the creation, of sin and judgment, of mercy and redemption, of the resurrection and of salvation. He should be a student of, even if not an authority on, theology, and he should approach his study neither as a fad nor a chess game but rather as a matter of deep personal concern for growth in faith, hope, and love, both within individuals and within society. He may remain childlike, but his childlikeness must be tempered by a high degree of communicative skill.

If the Christian faculty member views his profession as a part of his calling by and under God, it behooves him to know what his beliefs are and why he

holds such convictions. No classroom evangelist, he must none the less see how his discipline is related to man's quest for order and ultimate reality, and he must be able intelligently to show how the Christian faith is a viable alternative to the other faiths which seek to win the student mind.

A Faculty Consultation

KEITH W. IRWIN

Can theology still claim to be the queen of the sciences or is its role in the contemporary intellectual community that of consorting promiscuously with a variety of disciplines? Is theology primarily a critical discipline or a substantive one? Does it exist in an impregnable isolation by letting the secular world be the secular world, the academic disciplines be the academic disciplines, independently of any relation to it? What are the implications of the theological revival for the Christian's understanding of his work in the university? Does the Christian faculty member need some degree of theological literacy simply because of the discipline he teaches or because he is also a *man* concerned about the relation of his discipline to the work of the entire academic community, to the responsibilities in faculty committee assignments, to administrators, to students? Can an alternative between fundamentalism and complete dismissal be provided to give the Bible its proper role in developing theological understanding? Is it the case that we already have as much theology as we need because the end of the religious life is ethical and not intellectual?

These questions reflect the range of discussion that took place at the National Consultation on "The Role of Theological Study in the Faculty Christian Fellowship," December 4-6, 1959. More questions were raised than answered, but at least a few directions were manifest.

It seemed clear that there are serious obstacles to theological study, charges against the theological enterprise, existent in the thinking of many people in the university community. These must be acknowledged and honestly dealt with. It also seemed clear that an understanding of the doctrinal position of the Christian Faith might profit the teacher both as a man and as a scholar in his discipline. But the inverse of this was also asserted: the scholar working in his discipline has a contribution to make to the theological enterprise that should be heard. In the light of committee reports made in these three areas Professor William R. Mueller, chairman of the consultation, has prepared the *Invitation to Theological Learning* printed above.

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Urging serious discussion of this document, the Faculty Christian Fellowship plans to follow up a further recommendation of the consultation by preparing a series of study guides on basic doctrinal issues. These will be designed for use either by individuals desiring to read and think through their Christian beliefs on their own or by campus FCF groups willing to use them as a basis for study and discussion.

There were of course many issues raised by the consultation which merit further thought and concern, even though no follow-up is presently planned. Too few of those at the consultation spoke from the perspective of the Church or out of the Church's life, as though their beliefs were purely a personal matter. What is definitive for one's Christian beliefs? What role ought Bible, denominational affiliation, and personal experience play in the development of one's credo? Is it the case that one's theological opinions are a private creation and a private affair? The lack of any sense of authorizing source for one's beliefs is perhaps a witness to the poverty of most Protestant life at this moment and a challenge to Christian scholarship.

An issue on which there were clearly at least two camps was that of the relation of theology to the academic disciplines. The majority seemed to hold that there is at least an implicit conflict between the presuppositions of the Christian Faith and those of some of the current schools of thought in such disciplines as psychology, sociology, philosophy, etc. But others held that the problem of the Christian life is that of guilt and redemption, while the problem of the university is that of ignorance and its cure, and that these two sets of problems exist in different dimensions, hence do not come into conflict. This was expressed in another way in the view that God has withdrawn from the secular world so that man can be free in it; God is not a competing psychologist or sociologist. Hence if behaviorism is the answer of the competent scholar, it will have to be accepted as such. In various guises the old question of "What has Jerusalem to do with Athens?" is still an issue for Christian concern.

The call of the consultation is worded in a mild fashion: "An Invitation to Theological Learning." But as theology in the past and in its present resurgence has provided some of the liveliest chapters in the churches' history, it is the hope of the Faculty Christian Fellowship that the community of Christian scholars will respond to this invitation in more than a mild fashion and thus help to discover and define some of the dimensions of its identity and common life in the contemporary college and university.

The Loneliest Christian and the Unhappiest Man

FREDERICK SONTAG

While in New York City one Sunday I went to the Union Seminary Chapel to hear Paul Tillich speak on loneliness and solitude. The chapel was packed with students, visitors, and faculty as Tillich rose to speak. Some of the passages were superb.

He was there alone; so are we. Man is alone because he is man. In some way, every creature is alone. . . . Being alive means being in a body, and being in a body means being separated from all other bodies, and being separated means being alone. This is true of every creature, and it is true of man more than of any other creature. He is not only alone; he also knows that he is alone — he is aware of what he is. Therefore, he asks the question of his aloneness. He asks why he is alone, and how he can overcome his being alone; he cannot stand it. But he cannot escape it either. It is his destiny to be alone, and to be aware of it. But he revolts against his destiny — in vain, for not even God can take it away from him.

And this is the answer to the question why God himself could not liberate man from his aloneness. It is man's greatness that he is centered within himself. He is separated from his world, and able to look at it. Only because this is so, he can know the world, and love it and transform it. Only he who is alone can claim to be a man. This is the greatness, and this is the burden, of man.

The wisdom of our language has grasped these two sides of man's being alone. It has created the word *loneliness* in order to emphasize the pain of being alone, and it has created the word *solitude* in order to emphasize the glory of being alone. In daily life, these words are not always distinguished; but we should do it constantly, thus deepening by these very words the understanding of our human predicament.

Loneliness can be conquered alone by those who can bear solitude.¹

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¹Paul Tillich, "Let us Dare to have Solitude," in the *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, May 1957, pp. 9, 10, 10-11, 13.

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All of this reflects the influence of Existentialism on Tillich's theology, and the profundity of such a psychological analysis of man is obvious. Here an interesting parallel can be drawn between Tillich and his famous Danish predecessor, Kierkegaard. In an often overlooked brief piece set in the middle of Kierkegaard's *Either/Or*, the father of modern religious Existentialism sets the tone for the current interest in loneliness. Kierkegaard called it "The Unhappiest Man."

Somewhere in England there is said to be a grave which is distinguished not by a splendid monument, not by its melancholy surroundings, but by a brief inscription. The Unhappiest Man.

Now there are some individuals who live in hope, and others who live in memory. These are indeed in a sense unhappy individuals, insofar, namely, as they live solely in hope or in memory, if ordinarily only he is happy who is present to himself.

But when the man of hope would have a future which can have no reality for him, or the man of memory would remember a past which has had no reality, then we have the essentially unhappy individuals.

He cannot become old, for he has never been young; he cannot become young, for he is already old. In one sense of the word he cannot die, for he has not really lived; in another sense he cannot live for he is already dead.²

Thus Kierkegaard describes unhappiness, characterizing it primarily by a complete absence of meaning, and distinguishing it from past meaning now lost and from disappointed hope, either of which is preferable to no meaning in life at all.

Kierkegaard, like Tillich, is describing men who have become unhappy through loss of something valued and the loneliness which such loss brings. Yet Kierkegaard's real message is that no one is truly the unhappiest person who has either hope or memory left to give meaning to his existence. Only the person who has nothing at all to add meaning to his life is really tragic. To lose something valued is sad, but if one accepts the resulting solitude, as Tillich suggests, then he still has meaning in his life, either in hope or in memory, and he cannot be completely unhappy as long as existence has had or may yet have purpose.

As subtle and as provocative as all this analysis of loneliness versus solitude and of lost meaning versus unhappiness may be, the real question which I want to raise is the relation of such psychological study to Christianity. When you hear Tillich finish describing loneliness you see clearly that solitude is to be dis-

²Søren Kierkegaard, "The Unhappiest Man" in *Either/Or*, trans. David F. Swenson. London: Oxford University Press, 1946, vol. I, pp. 179, 182, 183, 184, 185.

tinguished from simple loneliness and is more acceptable. Kierkegaard gives an outline of types of unhappiness that is almost definitive, and it is true that to be unhappy with meaning still left in your life is not really to be as unhappy as if your life never had and never would acquire significance. Tillich does mention overcoming some solitude via communion with God, but is this all that Christianity has to offer the loneliest Christian?

Both Tillich and Kierkegaard are completely accurate in describing the essential loneliness of man and the unhappiness that comes from a lack of purpose and meaning, but neither gives enough stress to what the New Testament is full of: that since the coming of Christ no man needs to be alone or unhappy. Not only in some solitary moment of relationship with God, as Tillich mentions, but in anyone who accepts Christ, loneliness and unhappiness are essentially overcome. This is why the Christian gospel has brought such good news to so many sufferers through the years.

If Christ be with us, we are no longer alone and our lives are given meaning. This is the message of New Testament preaching which both Tillich and Kierkegaard fail to stress sufficiently. However it is absolutely true that no man can know religion until he has experienced within himself both loneliness and unhappiness, and becoming a Christian is no guarantee that both may not appear at regular intervals as long as life lasts. But the essential struggle of man against loneliness and unhappiness, this has been won, the Christian believes. The loneliest Christian is no longer really alone; and the unhappiest man has, through Christ not through himself, found a way to add meaning to his life and thus remove that final unhappiness, even while momentary disappointment still persists.

The virtue and the defect of Existentialism for Christian purposes become evident here. Existentialism, by the very meaning of the word, is strong in its analysis of the human situation and weak in its awareness of the presence of God and the new life which the coming of Christ symbolizes. Existentialism is not incompatible with Christianity, but it distorts the Christian gospel by changing the emphasis from God's work to man's nature. The genesis of Christianity is the announcement that God has come to man and that, through his own grace, God offers new hope and transformed lives to any who can and will make the sacrifices necessary to follow Christ. Christian preaching, by very definition, means to announce this good news, so that Existentialists may not make very good preachers of the Christian gospel — unless they are careful to shift the emphasis away from Existentialism's natural stress on man and his condition. Since the entrance of God into the world in human form, the stress must now be on the solution which the coming of Christ has made available.

What is it in the Christian message which can bring such relief from loneliness and put an end to unhappiness? The Gospels are full of such assurances, for the believer becomes a joint heir with Christ, and the beatitudes promise personal fulfillment, although not necessarily in this world. However the

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Christian believer may or may not see his present burdens lifted and the ways of the world reversed immediately. Thus feelings of loneliness can persist. What he believes is that ultimately his life will have meaning and that any unhappiness he has to endure is not permanent. Human life acquires new significance in the perspective of the Christian, and the ultimate futility which may grip a pagan is dispersed. His faith has made him whole.

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Books and Ideas

Between the Two Cities

The repute of Father Martin C. D'Arcy as a Roman Catholic theologian and philosopher is well established in the English-speaking world. He speaks as a Catholic, but he also masters the literature of any subject he considers, whether it be Protestant or secular. In his *The Mind and Heart of Love* he gave a Catholic interpretation of the relation of *Agape* to *Eros*, challenging Bishop Nygren's radical separation of the two. One could say that D'Arcy is unique in his range of intellectual interests but typically Jesuit in combining flexibility with the dogmatic Catholic position.

In *The Meaning and Matter of History* D'Arcy takes account of the whole problem of historical knowledge and in a brilliant opening chapter surveys the various approaches to the perplexing problem of epistemology in history, those of Dilthey and Collingwood for instance and of positivists and sceptics, as for instance Popper. He places Vico's rebellion against a rationalism which identifies nature with history in its proper historical setting.

D'Arcy inclines to a moderate position on the problems of a philosophy of history, sometimes defending Toynbee for instance against such critics as the Dutch historian Peter Geyl; and sometimes calling attention to the fact that Toynbee has not solved the problem of freedom and determinism in history. It is precisely the curious compound of natural necessity and human freedom, with man being at once the creator and creature of the historical process, which constitutes the radical difference between nature and history and which makes the possibility of a philosophy of history so dubious.

In the fifth chapter of his volume, entitled "Providence," he elaborates the difference between the Christian faith in divine providence and the philosophies of history based upon some "essentialist" ontology and therefore deterministic. "Perhaps," he writes in the preceding chapter, "Hegel . . . would have avoided some of the ambiguities of the absolute in history if he had availed himself of Vico's providence. As it is, the German idealist movement ignored Vico, yet so closely attached to his main insights, that Benedetto Croce was able to offer a more perfect form of historical idealism by joining Vico to Hegel. Whatever we think of Croce's interpretation of Vico, he did justice to the genius of Vico; and it is largely due to him that we now see the decisive place which Vico occupies in any true account of the philosophies of history."

The Meaning and Matter of History by M. C. D'Arcy. New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Cudahy, 1959, 301 pages, \$5.50.

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Why was the idea of Providence so important? D'Arcy answers, "It was the fact of the existence of providence which produced the radical change, removing the dark fears that human life signified nothing." D'Arcy believes that it was this idea which overcame historic fatalism on the one hand and historical caprice on the other hand. He has no simple idea of providence however. "The fact that many Christians are far too ready to see the hand of God in human affairs predisposes lay historians to discount all such interpretations; and I think they make the mistake of believing that the common attitude of believers is credulous and unscientific," he writes. He would avoid conflict with any scientific analysis of historic causes by placing belief in providence in a quite different dimension of interpretation. This is something like the difference between the investigation of a death by a detective and by a member of the family. Of course the problem is not quite as simple as it would appear from this suggestion. For any idea of providence is bound to contain specific content, which might fall under D'Arcy's condemnation of a credulous assumption of God's hand in any event of history which the believer regards as important.

One way of avoiding this tendentious religious interpretation of history in D'Arcy's thought is to make a distinction between "the Biblical story of God's dealing with his chosen people" and the "essences" of history about which the determinists speak. The Biblical story, according to D'Arcy, "leaves in the mind the image of a living personal God very different from the God of the philosophers." He thinks that the idea of Providence incorporates the distinction between existentialist and essentialist interpretations of life and history. He agrees with Sir Isaiah Berlin's strictures against historical determinism in his Comte Memorial lecture, "Historical Inevitability." Various forms of determinism, he declares, "have merely capitalised certain forces of history, Race, Nation, Life, Force, Spirit of the Age, and have made them the real agents of history." He is in agreement with Berlin, though he is not sure whether Sir Isaiah would not count religious symbols of meaning among the proscribed collective entities. Furthermore he is dubious about the radical nominalism of modern philosophical analysis which regards such collective entities as "People" and "Nation" as pseudo-realities but is not able to get rid of them in such a simple statement as "England declared war in 1939."

Nevertheless D'Arcy gives an essentially individualistic account of the idea of providence. "Freedom and providence go together," he declares. "For providence is not like a script, written beforehand. . . . It works through the freedom of individual men and women. . . . At the summit all is governed by love. The success of love has nothing to do with compulsion, for love needs no justification outside itself."

This individualism seems strange in the system of a Catholic theologian. It would seem to be a religious counterpart of Karl Popper's secular individualism; for Popper in his *The Poverty of Historicism* takes the position that all collectivist

and essentialist interpretations of history rob the individual of freedom and responsibility. But actually D'Arcy is not as consistently individualistic as the previous quotation would seem to imply. He takes the Christian symbols of the meaning of history seriously and therefore has a striking sympathy for our eminent Protestant theologian, Paul Tillich, who combines metaphysical speculations with Biblical symbols of meaning in his philosophy of history. Tillich's conceptions of "Christ as the center of history," his idea of the *kairos*, the fullness of time, and of Christ as the "New Being" all are appreciated as expressions of the ultimate meaning of history as seen through the eyes of Christian faith. He likes Tillich's distinction between "definitional and configurational symbols." The latter are ontological concepts "which resist definition." The philosophical task, according to Tillich, is not to define them but to illumine them "by showing how they appear in different constellations." D'Arcy writes, "Such a distinction, even as to language, is typical of Tillich. While antipathetic to some, this form of address has greatly impressed others. They recognise the fertility of mind which, allied to a religious and penetrating insight, seems to open new prospects for a Christian philosophy."

D'Arcy's appreciation of Tillich is rather significant of Catholic response to his theology. The combination of metaphysical with Biblical concepts is the obvious cause of this sympathy, though Tillich's metaphysics is essentially Platonic, while the Catholic theology is rooted in Thomas's combination of Biblical and Aristotelian concepts.

He naturally prefers Tillich to Barth. For Barth, declares D'Arcy, "The two cities, of which Augustine spoke, exist, but there is no intercourse between them." He is naturally opposed to this form of radical Protestantism with its lack of commerce between Christian faith, rooted in revelation and expressing itself particularly in eschatological symbols, and every discipline of culture which tries to throw some light on the meaning of the drama of history. I suspect that D'Arcy's conception of the "two Cities," one of the cities being the Church, does not deal fully with Tillich's own type of radical Protestantism. For if I understand Tillich correctly, he makes much of the fact that Augustine's annulment of the eschatological yearning of the early Church by his conception of the Church as the *civitas dei* robbed Christianity of any dynamic view of history, which emerged only at the end of the Middle Ages in the Franciscan movement as interpreted by Joachim of Flores.

These observations are naturally prompted by a Protestant interpretation of the Christian faith. They are not intended to detract in any way from a genuine appreciation of a Christian Catholic view of the meaning of history, elaborated by a penetrating, disciplined, and richly stored mind.

REINHOLD NIEBUHR

A Series of Dialogues

In his introductory chapter to *The Prophetic Voice in Modern Fiction* Dr. William R. Mueller (a Guggenheim Fellow, 1958-1959) has provided a justification — if any is needed — for attempting a book of this kind. We are faced in our time, he notes, with "the paradoxical situation in which much of our ostensibly religious writing is hardly worth the time of a person seeking religious insights and aesthetic satisfaction, and in which the most profound religious writing is frequently to be found in works which may initially appear to have little or nothing to do with man's relationship to God." It is not the flamboyantly-advertised "religious best-seller" but the apparently secular literary creation of a gifted imaginative writer which most often serves a prophetic function in our time, holding as it does an unrelenting mirror before our eyes and compelling us to look into the springs of guilt and hope that lie hidden within every heart and inform the life of every human community.

The situation that "justifies" Dr. Mueller's volume has been repeatedly analyzed in recent years. But the relationship that exists between religion and creative literature is so complex that we must express appreciation for another perceptive book about it, this one written by a scholar who has technical competence in both fields. More than one learned interpreter of this subject in the past has served the average reader as the White Rabbit did Alice, scurrying out of sight around corners and down darkening passageways. Happily in Dr. Mueller's case "technical competence" does not imply "technical presentation"; and the author's vigorous and informal style is refreshingly free from the professional jargon that is so appropriate at summit conferences and so baffling everywhere else. In the name of clarity he willingly risks being charged with superficiality and oversimplification. The author (with apologies neither needed nor offered) designates the audience for whom his book is primarily intended and addresses himself essentially to "those who have not yet come to grips with men who speak most directly to our unrest." Awareness of the author's intention in this regard is indispensable to a fair evaluation of the book. If the word can be rescued from disparaging connotations, this is an "introductory" volume of the highest order. It is specific in scope and structure; it bears no hint of condescension; it is filled with fresh insights, piquantly expressed; it manifests scholarship without pedantry; and at every point it evinces the author's concern to communicate intelligibly with readers who possess but a modest fund of formal knowledge about the topics under discussion.

The usefulness of a book that deals with so immense a subject depends in

The Prophetic Voice in Modern Fiction by William R. Mueller. New York: Association Press (a Haddam House book), 1959, 183 pages, \$3.50.

large measure upon the validity of the particular device that the author employs in order to bring the material under some kind of temporary control. The symposium-volume, to take one example, has here proved its worth in the past, utilizing as it does the specialized knowledge of individual contributors, while necessarily sacrificing something of unity in perspective and style. Dr. Mueller has elected to restrict himself to "a study of certain thematic relationships between the Bible and six [modern] novels which proceed with high seriousness, passionate intensity and literary skill in their search for the answers to our dilemmas." The themes themselves — no matter what label we attach to them — body forth the central concerns of biblical and contemporary writers alike. The novels chosen for analysis include James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (the theme of Vocation), Albert Camus' *The Fall* (the theme of the Fall), Franz Kafka's *The Trial* (the theme of Judgment), William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (the theme of Suffering), Graham Greene's *The Heart of the Matter* (the theme of Love), and Ignazio Silone's *A Handful of Blackberries* (the theme of the Remnant).

An objection might be voiced that the brevity of the list could indicate that the author is chiefly interested in bolstering a questionable thesis — that he has presented a "rigged case." Dr. Mueller is well aware of this treacherous pitfall and is far too experienced a hand at literary criticism to place these novels upon a Procrustean bed. "I have tried only to let Bible and modern fiction speak freely from their own inner beings and not to make an assault on the integrity of either. To do otherwise would be to fall to the most cardinal of literary sins, the dishonest manipulation of a literary work, through forcing it to say what the critic might like to hear rather than allowing it to speak from the springs of its heart." The interior structure of the chapters provides a partial safeguard against the possibility of such "dishonest manipulation." Each chapter moves "from a thematic discussion of the novel in question, to a study of the biblical proclamation on the same theme, to a consideration of the relationship between novel and Bible in regard to their understanding of the theme." This procedure is intended to result in "a series of dialogues between biblical and modern writers" and thus strives to eliminate careless interweaving of fictional and biblical strands of thought.

The author has exercised heroic restraint in confining himself to an examination of each novel as an individual and separate artistic creation, and by doing so he has enhanced the intelligibility of the "dialogue." But in imposing such rigorous limitations upon himself Dr. Mueller may have created certain problems of interpretation for the relatively inexperienced reader who now finds himself confronting for the first time the puzzling ambiguities inherent in such a novel as *The Fall* or *The Trial*. The author leans over backward to avoid presenting any single "approved" interpretation: "each reader's own sensitivity must be his guide, for the artist is not called upon to furnish the kind of explicit resolution which may characterize theological exposition." But the reader's sensitivity may well be dulled by his relatively narrow range of reading or by his unfamiliarity with an un-

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orthodox style of writing, while on the other hand Dr. Mueller's own native sensitivity is obviously informed by a wide acquaintance with critical materials and background detail. The author never consciously exploits this advantage; but he stands in imminent danger of rendering the reader's choice illusory by conferring a subtle accolade of approval upon those interpretations which possess a more positive relationship to the biblical theme in question. Given the direction and scope of this volume however, this particular dilemma is doubtless an unavoidable one; and Dr. Mueller, moving to meet it with humility and with all of the considerable skill at his command, succeeds to a remarkable degree in presenting the ambiguities with scrupulous fairness.

The "dialogues" end with an abruptness that pleads for the addition of a brief epilogue. It may well be that the author was unwilling to chance needless repetition of points so well taken in his introduction or wanted to avoid all possibility of concluding on a sermonic or pietistic note that would surely have violated that integrity of the novels which he has been at such pains to preserve. But the worth of the book might have been further enhanced if the author, considering in retrospect the six "dialogues" he has presented, had offered a summary reappraisal of the values and difficulties of such an approach to contemporary literature. In view of the fact moreover that only a half-dozen novels were here selected for study, some bibliographical suggestions would have been most welcome, to direct the reader toward other significant examples of modern fiction that might enter into fruitful conversation with the biblical tradition.

These omissions however are of debatable importance and detract little from the value of a book that will put many readers in Dr. Mueller's debt. A special sense of gratitude will be felt by college teachers of religion who are sensible of the undergraduate student's lively interest in the relationship that obtains between religious thought and imaginative literature but who have felt frustration at the relative dearth of sound, non-technical commentaries that might serve to sustain and enlighten that interest.

EDWIN A. PENICK

The Visigoths of Venice

A *Square*, according to the glossary appended to this book, is a "conformist, Organization Man, solid citizen, anyone who doesn't swing and isn't with it. Also called Creep and Cornball." A *Cat* is "the surging, sex-free, footloose, nocturnal, uninhibited, nonconformist genus of the human race." The argument is implied that the Cat can see through the Square (it is the basis of his scorn), but the Square

The Holy Barbarians by Lawrence Lipton. New York: Julian Messner, 1959. 324 pages, \$5.00.

can never enter the magic alley along which Cats relate to each other. The reviewer of this book must write with the uneasy feeling that his corners are showing. The truth is that he is not really with it, and he has not managed one modest little swing.

The intention of the author however is not to breed Cats but to make Squares hip. Lawrence Lipton, benevolent shaman of a tribe of Beatniks in Venice, California, allows us to peer through the grimy windows and to overhear the conversation in the pads. It's a good show. The beat generation is flinging a Can-Can protest against all proper people: the umbrella swingers, the oldsters with thin lips and hard eyes, the Cornballs with plastic haloes. The Cats are doing something about those contemporary dehumanizing processes which Squares only talk about. Though they have been disinherited, these Prodigals may have shaken the confidence of the folks back home and may have made all the elder brothers wonder about the rewards of respectability. For the briefest of moments Suburbia may wonder if golf is not really rather futile and the Volkswagen not a little silly. The kid in the schoolyard has taken a swipe at the big guy whom Oliver Wendell Holmes called "the moral bully." All this a Square can dig.

The Cats are artists — or at least sympathetic to the arts, especially in their avant-garde form. Though their paintings are unsaleable and though they are too undisciplined to master any musical instrument except the congadrum (there is not a violinist among them), Beatniks are connoisseurs of jazz. Squares must once again revise their pictures of these far out chicks. Suzuki's and Watt's Square Zens are philosophers looking at a flower and smiling; Kerouac's Beat Zens are hitchhikers thumbing their way between San Francisco and New York with occasional dips into Mexico out of sheer exuberance; Lipton's Holy Barbarians are floor squatters, listening in awed silence while Louis Armstrong sings "Mack the Knife." A jazz combo beats out the frenzied rhythm of the new Bohemian Bacchanalia.

And the Venetian Cats are poets. Lipton has organized them into a Workshop to study the relationship between poetry and jazz; others such as Kenneth Rexroth, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and Kenneth Patchen have conducted similar experiments in San Francisco. Though they have not as yet solved the problem of matching a finished poem to improvised music, they have met the difficulty like Organization Men and may yet finalize the solution. There is even a possibility, though a dim one, that Tin-pan alley will now try to make more sense, and the vapid lyrics which rattle through the hamburger shops will acquire some vestigial content. If lovers of poetry and lovers of jazz flee from the experiment like Faust from Auerbach's Cellar, these Cats were born without compunction and will continue their Cantos until something is learned about musical and verbal signs.

Not only that, the Vandals of Venice have undertaken a commendable reduction of the long list of possessions which an acquisitive society thinks

necessary. The effort at a radical simplicity is dimly reminiscent of Thoreau, Whitman, and Melville — for that matter of most artists who ever lived. But the great artists kept their lives simple and hated distractions because they wanted to conserve their energies for the psychic ordeal of creation. These Cats are poor inadvertently, like the dispossessed of the great cities. Their needs are threefold: jazz, sex, and marijuana. But this unholy trio leads to no concentration of powers. Instead their effect, as Lipton knows very well, is to disrupt psychological, social, and aesthetic structures and to introduce intolerable complexities. Though they are without possessions like St. Francis and his Little Brothers, the evidence shows that Beatnik poverty is not born of dedication but of irresponsibility. Christ's poor of the Middle Ages seemed to own everything because they had given everything away and so could speak a persuasive word to their greedy contemporaries; the Venetian Cats are poor because they will not work and so have no redemptive word to the Squares who may otherwise lack perception but can recognize Schmalz when they taste it.

But what is really disappointing about the Beatniks is that they have such poverty of imagination. They are footloose without being fancy-free. There is not on this rather large gallery of portraits one person who strikes the reader as an authentic, unique individual. The Venetian Cats are copy-cats. They look alike. The *haute couture* of the pads for several years now has been sweat shirts, dungarees, and sandals — not nearly so imaginative a wardrobe as the station wagon set has managed to contrive. The beard is supposed to be the sign of emancipation from the rat race, a fluttering banner which shows that the owner is proud to be unemployable; but it is also the badge of Beatnik conformity. The Cats act alike and think alike and talk alike: "But he'd been there, man, and he blew, and he flew, man, like high." They imitate the loose vocabulary and sloppy syntax of a New Orleans trombonist lapsing into incoherence from a heroin fix. There have been rebels who created their own style; but François Villon, Edgar Allen Poe, Dylan Thomas did not talk like sophomores at Central High. These Cats are fraudulent, as Venice, California is a fraudulent copy of Venice, Italy.

The freedom which they noisily assert is not creative because it is unrelated to the discipline without which achievement in any field is impossible. Their mistake is the same as that from which American education is now painfully recovering. It is not possible of course for anyone to be creative without deference to the conventions of the past; what they ask of the Squares is out of the question. But if one must be in debt to tradition, surely it is better to be beholden to the archetypal ideals of Western culture — "those large dreams by which men long live well" — than to the half-mad fantasies of society's moronic fringe. The tragedy of Beatnik conformity is that instead of imitating the Van Gogh who painted "Bedroom at Arles," it imitates the Van Gogh who cut off his ear at Arles.

BOOKS AND IDEAS

So far from having a fresh and vivid way of dealing with reality, the Beatnik specialty is an agile flight from the real world. When their fright in the presence of the commonplace is very great, they turn to Pot, one of their euphemisms for marijuana. The La Guardia Committee on the problem, cited by Lipton, hits them off precisely: "Idle and lacking initiative, they suffer boredom and seek distraction. Smoking is indulged in for the sake of conviviality and sociability and because it offers a temporary feeling of adequacy in meeting disturbing situations." When the landlady becomes strident about the rent and the problem of shopping for food without funds seems insoluble and the pity of being at once talented and helpless overwhelms them, they seek the quickest way they know to be sent, to go far out.

Apparently they have gotten no help from the Church. When they look to religion for rescue, they meet the same blank stare which that early Beatnik, Emma Bovary, saw in the face of the local curé. "Except among the teen-agers," writes Lipton, "who sometimes admit to occasional church attendance — 'to please mother' is the usual explanation — I have yet to find one beatnik who has found, or expects to find, any ritual salvation in the churches." Lipton is old enough to have pointed out that mothers, while not as a rule such cool chicks, have nevertheless a profundity about such things as discipline and modesty and the rightness of worshipping God. Kids have not yet had time to find out how mother's quaint common sense fits in with the primordial structure of the universe.

If the Cats would only listen, the churches could tell them something about history's arch-rebel, Jesus Christ. His follower, St. Paul, said, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed." The nonconformity he had in mind was not by infantile rebellion for its own sake, like the intransigence of Dr. Spock's five-year-old boy, but by the faith that in this way everything could be made new. Mother's insight is that the Cross shatters the world, yet in such a way that nothing is lost but everything is changed and whole and radiant. Lipton knows better than we do the price that is paid when anyone ignores the Church and stakes his life on the absurd simplicity of rebellion.

The weakness of *The Holy Barbarians* is that its value judgments are jejune. As social criticism it betrays an unflagging naiveté. The footnotes at the back expose the spurious scholarship of Espresso Bar anthropology. Complex, to be sure, is the basic problem of how creativity at once accepts and rejects conventions; but it will never be solved by the use of such clumsy tools. The merit of the book for churchmen is that it is a valuable description of a style of life which seems increasingly attractive to many young people who will not be stirred by bowling tournaments and folk dances.

PAUL ELMEN

Insights into the New Testament

Not many men undertake to write a book on the "theology of the New Testament." Therefore when one is published it necessarily creates a good deal of interest — all the more so when its author is as well known as Alan Richardson. The Professor of Christian Theology at the University of Nottingham has organized his book around subjects rather than authors, dealing with such key biblical themes as the Kingdom of God, the Holy Spirit, Messiahship, Christology, the Resurrection, the Atonement, the Church, the Ministry, Baptism, and the Eucharist. It must be said to the author's credit that this writing is very often provocative and stimulating and that his imaginative and sensitive theological mind sheds new light on many biblical passages and themes. His discussion of the Virgin Birth for example is excellent; so also are his insights into the meaning of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. And I could mention many passages in the book where the author has, I think, put his finger on precisely the right point and has illuminated it with refreshing insight.

I am also in agreement with Richardson's statement that it is "fatal for our understanding of the Scriptures" to assume that any particular passage has only one interpretation. Would that the author however had acted on this assumption more frequently! It is precisely at this point that one must take exception to a book that is in many ways excellent. Richardson tends to be highly dogmatic on complex and controversial issues and at times makes rather astonishing statements in such a way as to leave the impression that there could hardly be any doubt about their truth. It is one thing to be dogmatic when speaking as a systematic theologian; it is another thing to be dogmatic when speaking as a historian or linguist. A statement made in the areas of history and language that is contrary to what is generally assumed or that is controversial in nature should surely be supported by evidence of *some* kind. But Richardson thinks evidence is unnecessary. Thus for example he translates *kainē didachē* in Mark 1:22, 27 as "new Torah." But does *didachē* mean Torah? It never translates *Torah* in the Septuagint where it occurs only once; and it is generally assumed to refer to *oral teaching*. But if Jesus' words are described as "new Torah," then it is an easy step to the assumption that "when in the Gospels Jesus is referred to as 'a prophet' or 'the prophet' we must understand that Moses, or the new Moses, is usually implied."

Similarly does the Greek *prosagoge* necessarily imply the office of a priest, as is assumed on p. 201? Or is it beyond dispute that for Paul angels are always demonic, that "there are no good angels in St. Paul"? Are the angels referred

An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament by Alan Richardson. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958, 423 pages, \$5.00.

BOOKS AND IDEAS

to in I Corinthians 13:1 to be understood as demons? And what does Paul mean when he writes to the Galatians (4:14): "You received me like an *angel* of God, like Christ Jesus"? Richardson makes other similar statements in the interest of dogmatic concerns, but they do not do justice to the literature he is interpreting, and they tend to create the impression that the New Testament is being used at times to support previously adopted theological positions and is not really being interpreted at all.

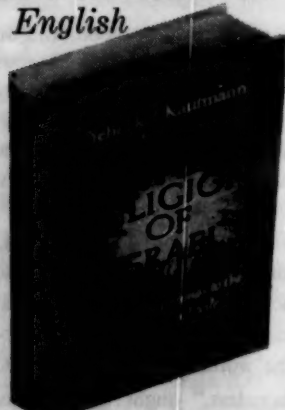
In his discussion of baptism, which on the whole is very good, the author simply states his opinion (not bothering to defend it) that the words of Hebrews 6:6 — "restore again to repentance" — really mean "be rebaptized." But surely the reader is entitled to know the grounds on which this statement is made. He cannot accept it just because the author tells him it is true. Perhaps the author of Hebrews *did* mean what Richardson says he meant; but the point requires discussion.

In another place Richardson dismisses the view of Bultmann and others, that "Son of Man" was a mistranslation of the Aramaic *bar nasha*, with the words: "the author of St. Mark's Gospel spoke Aramaic as his mother tongue." Surely Richardson cannot believe that his pronouncement has really refuted anybody! To cite a case of the sweeping generality: the author states that the Greek *amōmos*, although etymologically it means "blameless," ought to be translated "without blemish" when it occurs in the New Testament "since in the Greek OT it is the technical Levitical term for offerings that are not defective in any way and so are fit for sacrifice." Well, it is true that in the Septuagint *amōmos* is *sometimes* used with the meaning "without blemish"; but it is equally true that *amōmos* is also used in the sense of *blameless* — as for example in Pss. 15:2; 18:23, etc. One finds the author making this kind of unsupported, blanket statement too frequently. The result is that a question arises as to his purpose, and some doubts emerge about his method. Is his primary aim to elucidate New Testament theology, or is he using the New Testament to support certain theological hypotheses?

In his Preface Richardson states that one must "frame an hypothesis concerning the underlying theology of the New Testament documents and then . . . test the hypothesis by reference to the text of those documents in the light of all available critical and historical knowledge." After reading the book one is left with the feeling that the author's hypotheses have stood his tests very well, but that the tests could sometimes have been more rigorous. A specific hypothesis noted in the Preface is that "Jesus himself is the author of the brilliant re-interpretation of the Old Testament scheme of salvation ('Old Testament theology') which is found in the New Testament. . . ." Subsequently in the course of his book the author finds his hypothesis to be valid, noting that Jesus used the title "Son of Man" of himself and meant by it that he was the sign of the dawning of the new age; that Jesus also interpreted his life in terms of Isaiah's Servant of the Lord;



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that he understood himself as the Messianic Son of God; that he conceived of himself as the "prophet" and as the "new Israel." He further "conceived of his divinely appointed mission as that of creating the Church" and "from the beginning he intended that there should be a definite ministry within it." In fact, "Jesus fashioned the theology of the NT." The hypothesis was thus found to be true; but one has serious doubts that it was tested "in the light of all available critical and historical knowledge." In too many cases not all the data have been summoned, not all the arguments weighed.

In conclusion I want to emphasize that I do not want to minimize the value and significance of Alan Richardson's latest book. It is an important book and will remain so for some time. It is eminently readable and would well repay careful study by ministers and laymen, theological students and faculties. The author has attempted too much, I think; and the title of the book is not quite accurate. He has introduced us to a number of theological insights into the New Testament; but he has *not* introduced us to *the* theology of the New Testament.

BURTON H. THROCKMORTON JR.

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The Darwinian Revolution

This is a composite work of six parts each of which explores one dimension of the life and impact of Charles Darwin upon the intellectual world of his time. The first two parts deal with the biography of Darwin and his first explorations into natural science; the third part deals with the development of the theory of evolution — exploring both the extent to which the theory was heralded in other thinking of its day and prepared for by the climate of opinion at the time of its appearance; the fourth part deals with the reception accorded to the theory; the fifth with its form and content; and the sixth with the philosophical implications subsequently based upon it.

The most obvious qualification of this discussion is the thorough research and reporting that has gone into it. Because it is concerned to survey a historical event rather than to argue a thesis only rarely does the personal thinking of the author intrude explicitly — though her outlook may be inferred at many places from the choice of materials and the mode of reporting them. The author's sympathies are obviously with the search for objective knowledge in both science and religion, and she has little use for the radical conception of faith expounded by Darwin's near contemporary, Kierkegaard. The author is obviously less impressed with *The Descent of Man* as a scientific or philosophical contribution than she is with *The Origin of Species* and cites with obvious approval the fact that Alfred Wallace favored the latter but not the former. She clearly portrays Darwin as a hard-working scientist basically uninterested in the social currents of his day or the controversy that raged above his head.

Readers of this journal are likely to be especially interested in the extent to which and fairness with which the author handles the complex relationship which religious thinking bears to the reception and acceptance of the theory. While not obviously concerned to argue a particular perspective of this complex question, the author has a rather clear set of assumptions about what happened. These can be summarized as follows: Darwin was unattracted to, though not rebellious concerning, his father's intention that he should become a country clergyman, and as time went on Darwin became less and less interested in, though not violently hostile to, religious matters. The reception of *The Origin* was marked by traditionalism in scientific ways of thinking as well as orthodoxy in religious ways. In time the scientific opposition reversed itself rather completely as the religious opposition grew in strength and intensity. In time the religious community was divided between those who found evolution a radical idea subversive of genuine orthodoxy and those who found the

Darwin and The Darwinian Revolution by Gertrude Himmelfarb. New York: Doubleday and Co., 1959, 480 pages, \$5.95.

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theory a clue to a new metaphysical interpretation of the divine element in nature. Dr. Himmelfarb is convinced that Darwin so wrote *The Origin* as to be compatible with a creative positive idea of teleology, even though personally he did not intend to make the point so clearly and was surprised when Asa Gray drew theistic conclusions from it.

At a time of special interest in Darwin's work it is valuable to have at hand this thorough introduction to his life and thought — a work which, though it breaks little new ground, does review the old terrain with competence and delightful freshness.

EDWARD LEROY LONG JR.

The Vision of Tragedy

This is no dying generation, our contemporary scholars in the field of tragedy. The college teacher is perhaps not orderly enough to classify his own library, but he must feel the need of more space if he shares the current pervasive concern with tragedy. The titles have even begun to sound alike.

Yet the similarity of many of these books, of which Richard Sewall's *The Vision of Tragedy* is one of the latest, is no deadly duplication: no common grayness silvers everything. Since World War II studies in tragedy have in their general agreement vastly extended the range of what we understand as tragic and the forms that embody it. A generation ago critical concern was largely limited to the right definition and form of tragedy, especially as found in the drama and described by Aristotle. (*The Poetics* was most important in the approach to Shakespearean tragedy taken by my own much-respected teacher, the late E. E. Stoll.) And others argued, as in the Krutchian year of 1929, that there would be no more tragedy in our time. Literary scholars today, for all the inevitable and desirable clashes of opinion, look upon the drama as a form, not *the* form, of tragedy. Indeed one might alter the architect's slogan to read "Form follows vision." "The forms are real," Professor Sewall asserts, and the artist rather than the critic has recognized and guarded them, but they are formed by the vision, the tragic sense of life. "Direction and focus may change, but the vision is constant." Again, "The theme of the book is the unity and vitality of the tragic vision from *Job* to the present."

In the brief, eminently readable *The Vision of Tragedy* one will not find neat, closed definitions. The writer's method is to accumulate meaning in the course of examining in chronological order eight examples of tragedy from *Job*

The Vision of Tragedy by Richard B. Sewall. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959, 178 pages, \$4.00.

to *Absolom! Absolom!* (*Oedipus the King*, *Doctor Faustus*, *King Lear*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *Moby Dick*, and *The Brothers Karamazov* are the other "representative men.") Five short chapters at irregular intervals provide transition and continuity.

Basic to the tragic vision, says Professor Sewall, is a sensitive man's confrontation of an insecure universe. He must know terror and suffering; he must ask what it means to be. Uncertainty and ambiguity are of the essence, and the presence of any final set of answers removes the possibility of tragedy. (Thus Christian tragedy should be a contradiction in terms. "Christian tragedy, to put it briefly, is not Christian; if it were, it would not be tragedy.") The sensitive and insecure man must also be a man of action, whether a Job in verbal combat or an Ahab in mad pursuit of the white whale. The tragic hero must have a sense of evil; he must suffer — and learn through suffering.

The studies of the individual works are limited to the illustration of these and similar criteria. As illustrations they are provocative and stimulating, rich in suggestive interpretations. "The pride that moved Job is the dynamic of a whole line of tragic heroes, from Oedipus to Ahab." "Faustus, rather than Hamlet, [is] 'the first modern man.'" "It was Dostoevski who . . . wrote the definitive tragic analysis of our times." The chapters are not studies in depth: what can one do with *The Scarlet Letter* in six pages or with Ahab in four pages of the discussion of *Moby Dick*?

The Vision of Tragedy, because it is lively in its interpretation, will encourage further discussion of the nature of tragedy. Are we to agree that "the grim Freudian image" makes man a slave and thus non-tragic, or do we follow Albert Outler (in *The Tragic Vision and the Christian Faith*, edited by Nathan A. Scott Jr.) in crediting Freud with having made possible the "domesticated tragedy" of our time? The book sometimes raises its own questions. Professor Sewall credits Faulkner with having done most in this generation to make fiction tragic and considers *Absolom! Absolom!* "his nearest approach to the fully developed form of tragedy." But who is the sensitive man of action? Quentin, we read, has tragic perceptions but is powerless to do anything about them. Sutpen can act but is not harassed by doubts; "he never had a soul," as one character puts it. Yet we are told, "the tragedy is Quentin's," and Sutpen has "some of the qualities and many of the trappings of the tragic hero." In such confusion one is about ready to accept the idea that the artist is his own tragic hero.

This book should be read from cover to cover so that one gets a single vision of the Vision. It has its own organic unity, and such continuity as is afforded by the too-frequent repetition of key terms, like Jaspers' "boundary situations," is a mere annoyance. I was at first impatient with the occasional piling up of footnotes to be tracked down in the concluding "Notes and Refer-

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ences" section (one fifth of the entire book), but that section is so rich in extended discussion, quotation, and cross references to many contemporary writers on tragedy that I would not want to see it eliminated or even condensed.

Professor Sewall's course, "Tragedy," at Yale is now in some measure open to anyone who adds *The Vision of Tragedy* to his bookshelf. It is worth finding space for.

GERHARD T. ALEXIS

The Old and the New

"We are a biblical, evangelical and reformed church, with an ancient sacramental, liturgical and episcopal tradition," writes Dean Richard H. Wilmer, Jr., in the article on "Reunion" in *Viewpoints*, a book on Anglicanism by Anglicans. "At the same time," Dean Wilmer adds, "our respect for critical scholarship means that our total church life is suffused by the spirit of commitment to follow the truth wherever we find it and however it may upset some of our cherished calculations."

This same note is found in almost all of the articles in this book. The editors point out that all the contributors "value the Anglican tradition" and at the same time "they seek to set forth their understanding of the eternal truths of [Christ's] gospel in relation to new ideas, new discoveries and new depths of understanding that the modern mind presents to this generation."

The articles cover a variety of subjects: biblical scholarship, church history, liturgy, the pastoral ministry, preaching, the life of devotion. Christian ethics, Christian education, the Church's mission, and so on. An indication of a new spirit in Anglicanism is that one article is written by a woman! Emma Lou Benignus writes on "The Laity Today" — and very competently too, bringing out points not too often heard among Anglicans: that not only is there a priesthood of all believers but also that women are members of that body.

Sometimes the emphasis on the old and the new is brought out in unusual and even startling ways. In "The Church's Theology" James A. Martin Jr. declares, "Throughout her history the Church has run the danger of either saying that which is decisive in a meaningless way, or saying that which is meaningful in an indecisive way." Mr. Martin dilates on this point with insight, precision, and an extensive grasp of the problems which theology faces in the light of modern thought. William A. Clebsch, in his article on "Church History," makes the point that the American emphasis on "a pragmatically sociological interpretation" of

Viewpoints: Some Aspects of Anglican Thinking, edited by John B. Coburn and W. Norman Pittenger. Foreward by the Rt. Rev. Robert F. Gibson. Greenwich, Conn.: Seabury Press, 1959. 267 pp. \$5.00.

history presents a special problem to a "church with a history"; and that American history is so different from European or English history that redemption hardly means the same thing it has meant in Europe or England. Dean Jesse Trotter points out the value of an historically based authority as a safeguard against the "false myths" of the day, and at the same time he warns of the danger of authoritarianism.

The most startling statement about the ability of Anglicanism to maintain its tradition and still keep abreast of the times is made by William H. Poteat: "Anglicanism is old, very old — older than America, older than the modern world. Withal, it is said, it is always right up with the latest thing. We suffer from neither the gaucheries of the sects, nor from the nostalgia of the Romans. Anglicanism, it is widely believed among Anglicans, has built into an institution a solution to the problem of how to be both in the world and not of it!" Poteat then adds, "If one were to believe this official myth, however, he would be seriously misled." And again, after saying that "the rightly prized virtue of Anglicanism . . . is its profound sense of continuity," he adds, "Ironically, this very virtue may be the ultimate source of its blindness."

This article by Mr. Poteat on "Christianity and the Intellectual" is one that readers of *The Christian Scholar* will probably find most interesting. The blindness he speaks of on the part of the Anglican tradition is to "the world which produced Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, Sartre and Camus, Heidegger and Bultmann, A. J. Ayer and Wittgenstein, Cezanne and Monet, Picasso and di Chirico, Klee and Jackson Pollock." Poteat then goes on to adumbrate a non-conceptual means of communication as the only way to understand and to meet the mind of the intellectual in the modern world — or for that matter for the *Christian* intellectual to understand *his* world.

This same general idea is also brought out by Charles R. Stinnette Jr. in his article on "The Church and Psychology." He has some interesting and important things to say about "conative and subjective knowledge" — and also its dangers! Stinnette also makes some incisive observations about "non-verbal means of communication" in terms of *koinonia* as the "living incarnation of the gospel."

One also finds the usual note on Anglicanism as the *via media*. Dean Wilmer declares that because of the tensions within Anglicanism between the old and the new, "the Anglican Communion is in a unique position in Christendom to interpret Catholicity to Protestants and *vice versa*." Perhaps; but it may be that until there is a genuine *koinonia* there will be neither reunion with other churches nor communication with secularized intellectuals. Perhaps the only way to meet the new problems which the modern world presents will be through the recovery of this very ancient tradition.

RICHARD W. DAY



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BOOKS AND IDEAS

Some of My Best Friends are Professors: A Critical Commentary on Higher Education. New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1958, 250 pages, \$3.95.

This is an irritating book — not, as its author probably thinks, because of its criticisms of colleges, universities, and faculty, but because of the way in which sharp insight, accurate observation and constructive criticism are all mixed up with sweeping generalizations, clever half-truths, non-essential trivia, and subjective defensiveness. The result is that it will fail of its purpose to reveal the way in which so many universities and faculty are not living up to their own announced aims and principles and thus failing at the educational task.

Despite its irritating features, the book should be read by faculty and administrators, for it reminds us of four things we should never forget. One, that the failure of students by flunking a course or dropping out of college is fundamentally our failure rather than theirs. Somehow we have not been able to make education come alive. Two, while structures, procedures, and rules are perforce necessary in trying to educate large numbers of students, we must always remember that students are unique individual persons who must be dealt with as individuals and never sacrificed to systems and rules. Three, education is fundamentally a relationship between persons based upon concern, mutual respect, and affection. There is no excuse for faculty treating students with contempt, cynicism, and impersonality. Four, it is as hard to foster vital creativity in an educational institution as it is for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only by persistent unremitting effort can we avoid our creativity being overcome by pedantry.

HUBERT C. NOBLE.

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fabric of social relationships. This law and custom are less just than God wills, yet they cannot be disobeyed recklessly, for God uses them to preserve relative order and peace. However, God also continually brings their injustice under judgment, and calls Christians to work toward changing the law and custom in the direction of His will. Just as the law and custom are necessary for the maintenance of civil order, so we as citizens are responsible for the establishment and enforcement of the law and custom. But we must recognize that God judges and redeems our civil order whatever that order might be. Simultaneously, we must as Christians recognize and accept our responsibility as lawmakers in a democratic society. This is especially important as we view not only the law and custom which have fostered the lunch-counter demonstrations but also the civil rights' debate which is now being carried on in Washington.

2) Civil disobedience and passive resistance in response to what we feel to be an unjust civil order are, to the extent which we are willing to accept the legal punitive consequences of our disobedience, an affirmation of the rule of law. On the one hand, we vigorously protest the *unequal* enforcement of the law; on the other hand, we share with those participating in the demonstrations the conviction that the law must be enforced. Civil disobedience can be a means to demonstrate not against the rule of law or custom, but against the wrongness of particular laws or customs; it can be used responsibly, and with restraint, as a vehicle for seeking a less discriminatory civil order but not for the destruction of the civil order itself.

3) Academic freedom and academic responsibility are essential in the University, where all of its members (students, faculty, and administration) join together in the search for meaning and truth. Academic freedom involves the right of all the members of the University not simply to believe in certain truths, but also to act with integrity in the light of these truths. Therefore, when we, for instance, are asked to resign from a University because we have acted upon our convictions, academic responsibility demands that those who request our resignations consider the task of the University in the community as well as our right to hold — and if we hold, how can we help but pursue? — such convictions. As students we recognize our responsibility to the University, and that this responsibility includes the possibility of disciplinary action; but everyone who lives in the University shares this responsibility, and disciplinary action must never be simply a response to community pressure.

Above all else, one implication stands out in the demonstrations: we all stand under God's judgment, and in need of God's grace as we act, for act we must in the coming days. Those of us in the Christian Church must face with new concern and courage our own often racially divided churches. Those of us taking part in the demonstrations must recognize that not only might this mean breaking the law but also it might involve consequences beyond either our imagination or our choosing. Those of us who resist the demonstrations must be given eyes to see the civil order which we seek to maintain in the light of God's act of reconciliation in Christ. And those of us who deny any responsibility for this human alienation must realize that our very denial or our lack of concern is a contribution to the situation which gives rise to the demonstrations. We must at all times remember that just as Christ reconciles the negro and the white, so He reconciles the demonstrators and those against whom the demonstration is being made.

We close, urging you as fellow Christian students to inform yourself concerning these events, to pray for all of those involved, and to search for avenues by which you may creatively participate in this work of God in our midst.



AN AFFIRMATION

to

All Christian students and campus student
Christian groups in the United States

from **The Central Committee
of the National Student Christian Federation**

DEAR FRIENDS AND BROTHERS IN CHRIST,

Glory be to God, . . . the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen!

We of the Central Committee of the National Student Christian Federation feel a deep concern for, and involvement in, the recently initiated and now widespread student demonstrations, which are seeking the end of discriminatory lunch-counter policies in stores and public buildings. We recognize that in a larger sense this is a symbolic demonstration against racial discrimination of any sort. Moreover, incidents growing out of these demonstrations have thrust before us, in some cases violently, important considerations such as our relationship as Christians to law and the civil order, civil disobedience and passive resistance, and academic freedom and responsibility.

As Christian students however, our response to these turbulent events is founded in the Gospel of Jesus Christ — the knowledge that God has acted, and is acting, in the world. These events, and the situation which gave birth to them, surely stand as God's judgment upon us; we are humbled before Him. In God's judgment upon us we recognize, as well, His abundant mercy in Christ and His initiative in the ministry of reconciliation.

We are concerned with racial discrimination not alone because our Creator has endowed us with certain inalienable rights, but because Jesus Christ died to save all men. We, as Christian students, do not simply seek the realization of American democratic values; we witness to the fact that Christ died to reconcile all men to each other and to God. We rejoice in the knowledge that the living Christ is even now at work healing and reconciling where our efforts have fallen short. It is in the baptism in Christ that we have the ever-present sign that all men have been made one. Our actions as Christian students, "living in the last days," grow out of this faith, and we must not be surprised if among the participants in the demonstrations there are also non-Christian brothers who are pursuing a course of action similar to ours, nor should we fear to join with them in such action — always remembering to give God the glory.

Our faith calls us to share with you the following affirmations regarding the events which concern us all so deeply:

1) The law and custom which undergird the civil order are not, descriptively speaking, the embodiment of absolute values, but the manifestation of a particular

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Printed in Belgium

